FAIR NOREEN

BY
ROSA
MULHOLLAND

Southoe House School,

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"'THE LADY HONORIA!' HE EXCLAIMED"

Fair Noreen

The Story of a Girl of Character

BY

ROSA MULHOLLAND

Author of "The O'Shaughnessy Girls" "Cousin Sara" "Our Sister Maisie" "A Girl's Ideal" &c.

ILLUSTRATED BY G. DEMAIN HAMMOND, R.I.

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FAIR NOREEN

CHAPTER I

"She Will Still be Here in the Morning"

AN old woman and a little girl were trudging a road in Connaught, footsore with long travel, but now within a few miles of Glyn Castle in Torc Valley, the goal of their pilgrimage. They had walked from the south of Ireland, the old woman moved by a determined purpose, and the girl following, full of trust in her protectress.

The ten years of the child's life had been spent in this old woman's cabin on the hills of far-off Carbery, her playmates the goats; her food, porridge and potatoes; her feet unknown to shoes; her head uncovered by anything but its own wild ringlets. Yet, said the old woman to her neighbours scattered among the rocks and heather, Honoria was an earl's daughter, poor orphan, and Providence in its own good time would look to her and restore her to her lawful rights.

There were some who maintained that this child had died at her birth, and had been buried in the grave of her mother. And as her father, the impoverished Earl

of Finbarr, had before those events departed on an exploring expedition to polar regions, and had never since been heard of, there had been none to enquire into the fate or the identity of the girl whom old Mauria Ronan persisted in asserting to be the little Lady Honoria Turbary, only child of and sole heir to a lost and ruined nobleman, whose mortgaged properties had been divided and dispersed, whose name had dropped out of the memory of the world and even of his once regretful friends and his indifferent relatives.

The heathery mountains were glowing in the crimson light of a September sunset, with tumuli of golden cloud heaped above them. The travellers turned a corner of the hilly road, and suddenly saw Torc Valley below them, its long stretch of bog streaked with purple, its scanty emerald pastures, its glittering patches of waters and wetnesses, its groves of flag-reeds and yellow irises, and its scattered grey cabins and little white farm-houses.

"Yonder's the Castle," said old Mauria, coming to a halt on the descending road, and shading her eyes with her wrinkled hand from the blinding glory of the heavens.

"Where?" asked Honoria, straining her young eyes into the light.

"With its back to us, like a dark rock. The sea's the other side."

"It's far off still," said the girl.

"Aye; we've got to get across the valley. But there's a way by the stream, and I'm not goin' to take you to the castle to-night; maybe no welcome we'd get. But we'll stop at O'Donovan's. D'ye see the little white house with the elder-trees round it to keep out the

world? It's inside there that ye'll find the heart o' corn."

Honoria said no more. Her little brown, sunburned legs were aching with fatigue, and she plodded on, vaguely wondering whether the heart of corn was in the body of a man or a woman, or was growing in a field.

They were soon in the lower land, following the stream that was busily making its way to the near but still invisible sea. Once they sat down by the edge of the water and washed their feet. Grey veils began to gather from the hills over the valley, and the plaintive cry of plovers sounded eerily in the twilight. A light sprang up in the window of the farm-house pointed out by Mauria as O'Donovan's.

Darkness was gathering more and more thickly around, and the solitary light in the window ahead growing brighter, and shining as a beacon, when a figure, as if starting out of the rushy fen by the path, rose beside them. This was a boy clad in a decent jacket, with bare legs, a pair of shoes tied by their laces hanging over his arm, and a fishing rod in one hand.

"God save you!" said the boy in Irish.

"God save you!" returned the old woman.

"Who are you?"

"Travellers."

"It's a black, dark night that is in it."

"There's a light in O'Donovan's window."

"Is it to my mother's house you would be going?"

"You're never little Heber, the boy that belongs to her!"

"I'm all she has for that," said the boy stiffly. "But there's not much littleness about me. I'm big enough to take care of my mother."

"It s glad I am to hear it."

"Come along then," said the boy, and shouldering his fishing rod, he marched on in front till he brought the strangers to the open doorway of the farm-house, whence a stream of red firelight was pouring into the outer darkness.

"Is that you, Heber?" cried a voice from the interior.

"Me, and more," cried the boy on the threshold.

"Who is more?" asked the voice.

"Travellers," said the boy. "Come and see them."

The three stood in a little kitchen, illuminated by the blazing turf-logs on the hearth. Instantly a woman in dark clothing came out of an inner room, and looked at the strangers with astonishment.

"I'm Mauria Ronan from Cushlawn in Waterford. The postmistress wrote you a letter from me lately. You knew me once, madam, but neither of us is knowledgable to the other one, for so many long years that has gone over since."

"God bless you, Mauria, and you are welcome. I never thought you would be able to carry out your intention. Sit down at the fire. You must be hungry and tired. And is this the child that you call the little Lady Honoria?"

"It's her, madam; and no calling at all, but truth. If you lift your honoured eyes and look at her you'll see that she's the living likeness of the Earl of Finbarr, God help him, or God rest him, wherever he may be, whether he's in this bad world still, or well rid of it in a better!"

Mrs. O'Donovan looked at the girl, who stood a little withdrawn, all her small person expressing one question, her keen brown eyes gazing through a mesh of tangled

fair hair that had been blown about her head in wreaths upon wreaths by many a disorderly wind. The question to be answered, "Was she to be believed in, or was she not?" seemed imperatively demanded by the bend forward of her slender body, and the outlook of an anxious mind through those eyes full of eager intelligence.

"I see it," said Mrs. O'Donovan with a smothered sigh.

The tension of Honoria's little body and soul relaxed, and the keen brown eyes melted and took a velvet softness. She threw back her hair with both hands and looked gratefully at the woman who had declared for her. She had already known the bitterness of being called an impostor.

The feet of the strangers were washed according to the old Irish custom. Heber carried a pan of water to a bench at one end of the kitchen and performed the service, while his mother spread the table for a meal. The boy then went to a little outhouse and procured some new-laid eggs. The hostess mixed some batter, and baked a light cake on the red turf-embers, drawn out on a hearthflag under a shallow portable oven; and apples from the small orchard beyond the gable, roasted while the cake baked, were added to the feast. After supper Mauria was seated in a straw armchair in the chimney corner, and talked to her hostess, who knitted while she listened, dropping her needles now and again to put in a few earnest words of interruption. At the same time Heber and Honoria sat together on a long, wooden stool at the other side of the fire, entertaining each other as children know how to do. The girl was too tired to have much to say, but Heber had plenty to tell about the fish he had caught in the deep part of the stream, and

the nests of the hibernating birds that would soon be arriving from all parts of the world to build in the clefts of the great cliffs over yonder in the sea, facing Newfoundland.

When the tired wayfarers were asleep in the best bed that the little farmhouse afforded, Heber came close to his mother and questioned her.

"Mother," he said, "that little girl is beautiful, like the princesses in the fairy tales you tell me. The old woman called her the Lady Honoria. If she is a lady like that, why does she go about with bare feet, and dressed like the poorest little girl you ever saw?"

"Because her family have been unfortunate, and she has no money," said Mrs. O'Donovan. "The world is full of strange ups and downs, Heber."

"And she is in the 'downs'," said the boy reflectively. "I mean to go in for the 'ups', and I would like to pull her up with me."

"Put it out of your mind and go to bed, Heber. The world is full of temptations too. Nothing is safe but contentment with the will of God."

Heber was not listening. He stood up and looked into the fire with shining eyes.

"She will still be here in the morning," he said exultantly, and then, hurried by his mother, he obeyed her, and went to his bed in a little loft to which he had been relegated in order to make room for the strangers.

After he had gone, the mistress of the house put away her knitting, extinguished her lamp, and sat in the firelight with folded hands, looking at the embers, rapt in memories of her past life which had been stirred and revivified by the arrival of these visitors and her con-

versation with the old woman who had so confidently claimed her hospitality.

Mildred O'Donovan had a romantic story of her own. Low be it spoken, her name and the record of her birth were in the *Peerage*. Sentenced by sordid relatives to marry a wealthy old man who was hateful to her, she had run away from her home, and the result of her flight had been her wedding a young farmer, a plain, honest fellow who had come to her rescue. And she had never repented of her choice, though now in her middle age she sat, a widow of low degree, at the humble hearth of a lonely cottage farm-house in hungry Connaught.

All this had taken place in Mauria's country, and Mauria had known her as a handsome young lady, riding and dancing in her first bloom, before her fox-hunting and spendthrift uncle had finally ruined himself, and decided on making the high-spirited girl a means of improving his fortunes.

As she sat at the turf fire now, her thoughts went back to the night that brought her face to face with a dreaded marriage into which she was to be forced on the morrow. She had known of a case like her own ending in gilded misery and wickedness, because the bride had been weak enough to yield to persecution.

She remembered throwing open the window and gasping a prayer for guidance. It was a hot summer night, with the threat of a storm coming. Her eyes had searched the dark masses of the trees, the sullen clouds mustering above the sea, as if she had been looking for some miraculous means of escape; but nature was unresponsive, and had shut her out from its sympathies.

The next thing she remembered was groping her way down dark passages and stairs, and unfastening a door, fearful of disturbing the household. Then she saw herself flying along the road in the dark night dreading nothing except capture. She had no idea of where she was going to hide, or who in a fearsome world could be expected to shelter her. Rain began to fall in heavy drops, and there was a roll of thunder from the hills. Her light dress was covered only by a thin cloak, her feet were in evening slippers. She remembered vividly how she ran on, drenched with rain, through the lightning, with an instinctive horror of being killed by it, though aware that life could have nothing good in store for her.

Next, memory brought her the sound of the fast trot of a horse. Someone was flying through the storm like herself. When horse and rider came up, the lightning revealed her as the form of a woman crouching as she ran. The man stopped, and, after a few imperative words, lifted her behind him on the saddle and hurried forward.

That was her husband, Michael O'Donovan, a manly young farmer whom she had seen at the athletic sports of the countryside, and had danced with at the latest harvest-home. She remembered how he had stopped a minute during that ride to take off his coat and throw it round her shoulders, and his astonishment, when he reined in at the door of his farm-house and carried her in, to find that the woman he had succoured was not some poor wandering tramp, or belated farm girl getting home from market, but was the young ady of the castle, whose wedding was announced to take place the next morning.

The ride had been a long one; she was drenched with rain, and shivering with the chill of her wet garments; and she was immediately seized with rheumatic fever. Mauria was called in to nurse her, and there she lay in Michael O'Donovan's house, he himself having vacated it for her service, all the long weeks while the inexorable illness lasted. And before she was able to stand up straight on the uncarpeted floor of the frugal room that had harboured her, the amazing news of her elopement with the farmer had become quite an old story in the county.

That was how her marriage had come about. Michael adored her, and she was without a friend in the world. Her name was to be mentioned no more among her relatives and acquaintances. In the midst of such desolation O'Donovan's chivalrous devotion shone as the only light, and she married him in an enthusiasm of gratitude.

All these bygone scenes and the characters who acted in them arose before her and lived again as she gazed into the turf embers, and following them trooped past a crowd of less important memories. Among these appeared the Earl of Finbarr (whose child this little Honoria was asserted to be), whom she had met as a young girl in her uncle's house, he being then a young man, heir to a title and to certain mortgaged and impoverished estates. His alleged marriage had taken place long after she herself had dropped out of all knowledge of life in her native county; for, owing to the wrath of her uncle, her husband had been evicted from his Waterford farm, and they had taken refuge in Connaught, where injured family pride could no longer be offended by their existence.

She remembered the young earl's striking face, bold and brave, and her uncle's scornful allusions to the peculiar line of his distinctions at college, and his absurd turn for mathematics—a study of no use whatever in a fox-hunting universe. All she had known of him further had been learned from Mauria's crude letters, which had followed her at intervals from Waterford to Connaught.

No, she had never repented of her wild flight through the storm out of cruel aristocratic prosperity into poverty and obscurity. The evil from which she had fled she recognized even now as the worst that could have happened to one of her character and temperament. It was in her nature to love intensely and only what was good, and the marriage from which she had escaped would have proved her moral downfall.

Her life as a farmer's wife had at first been hard, despite all her husband's efforts to make it tolerable to her, but her natural high courage and great energy of character had enabled her first to endure and afterwards to love it. Several children had died, the sole survivor, the youngest, being the little Heber who was now the one joy of her heart and the object of her anxiety. After her husband's death her long experience had enabled her to manage the little farm with prudence, and to maintain her child and herself in their frugal home with decency.

When Mauria had written to her the romantic story of the lost Earl of Finbarr, and of his child who remained in an unfriendly world, it had sounded like a fairy tale; and that the old woman should have carried out her intention of bringing the girl under the notice of her father's relative in Connaught, who happened to be

Mrs. O'Donovan's landlord, had taken her quite by surprise. She had always doubted whether Mauria's imagination might not have been imposed upon by coincidences; but seeing that her memory of a young man's face, which she had almost forgotten, had been startlingly revived by the first look at the eyes and brow of the child, she had given her adhesion to a cause that might yet have to be fought out with exceeding difficulty.

And now they were here, the old woman and the girl, and what was the next step to be taken? She greatly feared that the fact of their receiving her hospitality would not gain them increase of favour in the eyes of her landlord, Major Turbary.

CHAPTER II

"I Intend to go and Find Him"

THE little lady who claimed to be an earl's daughter, though heiress to nothing, was out early in the open, where she found Heber waiting for her; and the two set out to explore the bog-land skirting the little farm, where the brown pools appeared to be full of red wine under the crimson glare of a frosty sunrise.

As they forgot to return until late in the morning, Mrs. O'Donovan put their breakfast on the hot hearth-flag, and talked and listened to old Mauria, who was full of anxiety to know something more of the great man to whom she was about to present his little kinswoman.

"I can only give you my own experience of Major Turbary," said Mrs. O'Donovan. "He has a bad name, and true enough he is a hard landlord. He says he is poor himself; and perhaps he is, trying to keep up appearances in a castle, giving hospitality to some of his own class, with whom he stands high as an old soldier who was wounded in the Crimea in the beginning of his career. His chief quarrel with his tenants is about the turf and sea wrack, for which he makes them pay. They can't do without the fire on the hearth or the wrack to manure the potatoes, so he has them in his power. The rents are high for the hovels and the green patches that

stand clear of the bog, but he says the land is his, bestowed on him by a just Providence, and that anyone who robs him of his own is accursed in the eyes of Heaven. The people think differently, but they go on paying and starving. Many would go to America, but they have not means to make such a move. As for me, I pay him all he asks, and he lets me alone."

"It's little nature we have to expect from him, so," said Mauria.

"I'm not sure about that. He's good enough to the servants about him, and now and again he will do a kind thing. But he won't be contradicted or thwarted."

"Oh, then, if he doesn't take my child into his arms I'll contradict him and I'll thwart him!" said Mauria.

"You will need to be very careful," said Mrs. O'Donovan. "He's a magistrate, and he will look at your case as the law sees it. He will want all your proofs, and if you have not got them ready he will not listen to you. And, after all, if the child is proved to be what you say she is, he is not bound, as her kinsman, to provide for her. What do her claims amount to at the best? The last relic of an extinct title, with no fortune to support her assumption of dignity. A white elephant the world would call it; and he would only laugh at it."

"Are you gettin' hard too, dear Madam O'Donovan?"

"No, but I am trying to put the case clearly before you. Don't go in bullying this old gentleman. If you do, her chance is lost. Rest awhile here before you proceed any farther, and make up your mind to be cautious and sensible."

"Well, dear madam, you are a born lady like the best

o' them, and you ought to know better than me. But how I am to tie up my tongue—that passes my comprehension!"

But she accepted the invitation to rest and try to learn prudence, and sat in the chimney corner telling old stories of Waterford county, especially those connected with the family of the lost Earl of Finbarr, and the follies of those who went before him, blasting his future before he came into existence.

All reached the ears of her hostess as echoes of tales she had heard in her youth. Of how much might be truth and how much fable she could not judge; but one fact was distinctly present to her mind, that the earl's inheritance had been an empty one, and had been more a hindrance than an advantage to him. She was aware that he was a clever man, with a passion for exploring the unknown regions of the world; that he had early in life gone northwards with a daring expedition; and that, having returned after years of absence, he had departed again. It was during the interval between his voyages that he had married, or was supposed to have married, his wife and child dying on the eve of his second departure. She also believed in Mauria's statement that the child supposed to have died had been resuscitated, and its life preserved by friendly intervention.

Mauria's letters to her on the subject, coming at intervals during the last ten years, had interested Mildred, reading as she did a strange romance between the lines of the curious, ill-spelled documents, with their passionate expressions of attachment to the little, solitary descendant of a noble line, and their vehement denunciations of those who refused to acknowledge or provide for her.

Knowing old Mauria's sterling honesty of character,

she had been willing to believe in her case; but there had always remained in her mind a little doubt as to whether the faithful creature had not, by circumstances, or by individuals less conscientious than herself, been made the victim of a disturbing delusion. Not until she had seen the child looking at her from beneath the brows and with the eyes of one whose lineaments she had not forgotten, had she really believed that Mauria's nursling was truly the daughter of the Earl of Finbarr.

The fact having been now accepted, Mrs. O'Donovan felt a warm interest in the little waif, who was, like herself, an outcast from her family and class. But she, Mildred, had made her choice, and sealed her fate by her own action. She was now in sight of the eternal goal, and she knew of how little worth was the favour of this world. She had stepped over the border with a sufficiently matured mind, and fortified with a good education. This child was on the threshold of life, and had everything to lose or to gain, without choice or fault of her own. A struggle must be made to provide her at least with education. One look at her face gave assurance that she was not stupid. Equipped with education and training, she might take the goods of life in one hand and its evils in another, and by a path of her own might yet reach higher altitudes than her selfish kinsfolk wot of.

So thought Mildred O'Donovan in the ripeness of her judgment, trained by hard experience, while her needles were flying and Mauria in the chimney corner was repeating and reiterating all the facts of her case, and her accusations against those cold and callous ones who had hitherto turned a deaf ear to her.

A rainstorm came on about noon, and the children

were seen running from their playground on the bog, arriving drenched, with the rain dripping out of their hair.

"Noreen, Noreen!" shouted Mauria, forgetting her little ladyship's title and dignity, "is it dead drownded you're goin' to be after I bringin' you so safe so far?"

"It takes a great deal of rain to drown us in Connaught," said Mrs. O'Donovan; and the little lady was put into a long skirt of her own, and a white jacket several sizes too large for her, tied round the waist, and had her hair dried and brushed smooth, when it immediately broke out again into its natural ringlets. Heber had retreated to his loft, and returned wearing his best blue jacket and a pair of knickers neatly patched; then the children sat at the fire on two stools and ate their breakfast.

As the rain continued with bellowing gusts of wind from the sea, and as Mrs. O'Donovan's wardrobe promised no more changes of clothing for that day, the boy and girl proceeded to look about for some means of enjoying themselves within the farm-house.

It was a small, two-storied dwelling, and up the one narrow flight of stairs there was a little sitting-room with two windows, one of which was in the gable end and fronted the sea.

"May I take her upstairs and show her my books, Mother?" said Heber; and they spent their afternoon in that little upper apartment.

It made no pretensions to be a drawing-room, or a parlour, or a library, or any other kind of room to which a name is given. Into it had been gathered all the few things that had remained to Mrs. O'Donovan belonging to the early years of her life. At the break-

ing up of her uncle's establishment, on the occasion of his final downfall, these relics had been sent to her through the instrumentality of faithful servants, who claimed them as the property of Miss Mildred—some books, some engravings, some bits of old china, the curtains of dark-green silk out of her old boudoir, a few Persian rugs on the oak-stained floor, a Chippendale armchair, a long bookcase, a lattice-paned corner cupboard, and a harp. Mildred O'Donovan called it, to herself, her Memory Chamber, and for many years she had seldom remained in it more than a few minutes at a time, just while she opened or closed the windows, or dusted the furniture, or fetched a book, or even gratified a humble visitor by playing some sweet old melody on her harp; but since Heber had begun to show a taste for reading, the room had been visited more frequently on account of the books.

"I want to show you my books and my maps," said Heber, helping his little lady guest to hold up the long skirt with which she was encumbered, as they climbed the short stair. "I love my maps better than anything. They spread out over the world, instead of keeping you always in one place, as you are without them."

Honoria knew what he meant, despite all crudeness of expression.

"Were you always here?" she asked.

"Always," said Heber. "But I don't intend to be."

"But this is a lovely room," said Honoria. "I would like to stay in it for ever. I never was in such a splendid house before."

Heber laughed. "Wait till you see Glyn Castle, where you belong to."

"I never was anywhere but in Mauria's little house.

It is very small and dark, and the hens and the goats come in. But I love the little kids and the chickens."

"I know plenty of places like that," said Heber; "but this is better, because my mother is a lady. These are her things that she used to have when she lived in a gentleman's house. Father was good, but he was only a farmer. That is his gun on the wall; it is not loaded. I don't remember him, but Mother does. It is better not to marry a bad man that you don't love."

"I wouldn't," said Honoria. "What a lot of books!"

"Mother teaches me out of them."

"Don't you go to school?"

"I do; an awful distance off. But I do more lessons here than at school. Mother knows a lot; and Mr. Ferrall gives me extra lessons two or three times a week. He lives over yonder across the bog, this side of Glyn. He's a friend of ours, and a gentleman."

Honoria felt that she was a very poor and ignorant person, for she had never learned anything except at the National School. She forgot all about her greatness as the Lady Honoria. She was nothing beside this Heber.

"Look at the sea," said the boy, as they stood at the gable-end window and saw, half a mile away, mountainous grey waves, white-capped under an orange sky curtained with sombre storm-clouds. "That is where I want to go, out far, far, as far as the sea will carry me!"

"Oh, don't!" said Honoria. "That is what my father did. He went to the far seas where there is nothing but ice; and he never came back."

"I know," said Heber. "Your father is the Earl of Finbarr. He is a brave man; I intend to go and find him."

CHAPTER III

"I Don't Want to See Her"

To say that Glyn Castle had seen better days is not to make too wild a suggestion as to its past glories. Worn paint and threadbare carpets must have been once fresh and new, but it is questionable whether the big curtainless bedrooms had ever been comfortably appointed. The stairs were carpeted only up to a certain point, from which they rambled on in nakedness on their way to the roof. There was some air of nobility about the great hall, with its floor flagged with black and white marble, strewn with some attenuated mats and rugs, and saved from an air of desolation by a huge, ever-glowing fire of life-giving turf—that fuel which was an abiding cause of struggle between the Major and his tenantry. For the rest, the apartments lived in by the Major himself, and frequented by his few friends, were sufficiently comfortable as bachelor quarters. Ladies seldom made their appearance at Glyn Castle.

The surroundings were grimly splendid. The old, grey granite walls of the castle stood on an eminence which sloped down toward a rocky, shelving beach facing westward, and the narrow windows caught red lights at sunset, sometimes lurid enough to suggest marine warfare, of which the raging flames consumed the clouds and the carnage stained the sea.

Some such thought was in the mind of the old Crimean soldier as he stood at the window of his drawing-room, looking out to the ocean at the crumbling and darkening splendour while waiting for the appearance of his English guest, and for the announcement of dinner.

A slight, respectful cough made him turn round to see his man-servant at his elbow.

"What now, Kerrigan?" he asked peremptorily.

"It's the ould woman and the child, your honour. They're here again."

"Confound them! are they?"

"You told me to bid them come back this evening, sir."

"The more fool I, then. What have they got to say to me?"

"The ould woman says you'll know when you talk to her, sir."

"Likely enough," said the Major, making a short sound between a snort and a laugh.

"It's about the little girsha, sir, that she says she has something to tell you, sir."

"I think I have it now; bring her to the hall after dinner and I'll settle her."

The guest appeared, and the friends went to dinner in a long, gloomy room, furnished chiefly with dingy old portraits and handsome antique silver. The dinner was good: hare soup, fish, game, with plenty of what the Major called the wine of the country. The Major did not require his guests to fast; neither did the sea that supplied the turbot, nor the moor that was sacred to the sportsman's gun. The men at table had been shooting partridge and plover all the week, except for yesterday's fishing in the lake up in a hollow of the mountain.

The two were as unlike in appearance as in many other matters. Lord Gytrash was big and burly, with a blunt countenance; the Major was spare in figure, and his sharp features suggested a critical and sarcastic temper. They had been friends from youth, and in one particular they had been alike. Both had loved the same woman, and both had been rejected by her. Their acquaintance had begun with rivalry and almost enmity; but finding that both had been aggrieved, if not wronged, they agreed each to accept the other as a good substitute for what had been lost. That the woman who hurt them had not met with very great good fortune as a result did not seem to have afflicted them. They never spoke of her to each other, or to anyone else, and the only lasting sign, if sign it were, of her power was in the coincidence that neither of these men had ever married.

It was only of late years that Major Turbary had taken up his residence at Glyn. Even now a part of every year was lived by him with Lord Gytrash, at Tam Towers, in Yorkshire, or at his club in London. The autumn was usually spent by Lord Gytrash at Glyn.

"I expect a little amusement after dinner," said the Major; "I have to interview an old woman who has been persecuting me for some years back, hoping to persuade me that a child she has taken up is the daughter of the Earl of Finbarr. You remember Finbarr?"

"Of course I remember him. But he never married; he hadn't two coins to rub together. He went out to find the North Pole, and came back without it. And after a short time he went out again. He hadn't much time to get married."

"I expect the old woman is mad, and ought to be

locked up. My refusal to notice her letters might have silenced her. But here she is, having travelled from Waterford to introduce Lady Honoria Turbary to her relatives."

Lord Gytrash laughed.

"What an enterprising old lady! But she must be very ignorant, if she is an impostor; for did Lady Honoria exist she could have nothing to gain by her existence, no money, no land, no inheritance of any kind, nothing but her father's name——"

"But there are others of his name, and she thinks they will provide for the girl."

"And she, as the foster-mother, will benefit by the girl's good fortune?"

"I suppose so; but I am going to show her that she had better have kept the brat at Waterford."

"You are going to see her to-night?"

"They have been hanging about the place all day, and I want to have done with it."

The hour was late when, the men having smoked and talked to satiety, the Major at last rang and asked about the troublesome visitors.

"They're in the hall, sir, by your honour's orders."

The gentlemen exchanged smiles as they rose to go down to the hall, Lord Gytrash amused, the Major with a dry satisfaction at the prospect of dealing once for all a finishing blow to imposture and impudence.

When they entered the hall the old woman and the little girl were standing near the fire, with their backs to the light. Mauria came forward with confidence. Honoria withdrew, terrified, into the shadows.

"Well, madam," said the Major grimly, "what is this that you have got to say to me?"

"It's that I came to bring Lady Honoria Turbary and leave her with her own proper relations," said Mauria stoutly. "I kept her since she was a baby, with nobody to look after her but myself; and I did not begrudge it to her. But she'd want better lookin' after now than I can give her, and a little edication and manners to be even with the nobility."

"Capitally put!" said Lord Gytrash, laughing, while Major Turbary stood staring at the old woman, speechless with exasperation. But the latter restrained his wrath, which would have put the intruder out of the door on the instant.

"You are an impostor," he said. "Lord Finbarr had no children, never was married. Do you know that I am a magistrate, and can have you put in prison for an attempt to obtain money on false pretences?"

"I'm no impostor; do your worst. I want no money. Take the child an' do right by her, and you'll have no more trouble with me. The Earl was married in Norway; and he went off in his ship thinkin' his wife an' child were dead. The ship wouldn't wait for him, or he would ha' seen it out. The child wasn't dead, though it was thought to be, and that word sent to the father. When the mother was buried, and the Earl sailed to God knows where, strangers sent the little crature to me. Nobody wanted her over there, nor over here neither, but myself, for he had married the wife out foreign, and said little about it, because, I suppose, he hadn't the means to set her up as the Countess of Finbarr——"

"I think she believes her own statement," said Lord Gytrash, aside.

"Confound her. I don't care whether she does or not,"

said the Major. "It's a got-up story. Where are your proofs?" he shouted at Mauria.

"Proofs, is it?"

"Aye is it. The register of the marriage of the Earl of Finbarr, and of the birth of his child."

"Well, your honour, impostor as I am, I thought of that too. An' I wrote about it. But the vestry of the church got a fire in it, and the books were burnt."

"Very likely; just what I expected," said the Major. "Now, you old trickster, be off out of this as fast as your old legs can carry you. At your time of life you might have lived to know that honesty is the best policy. You have made up a cunning lie——"

"No lie, no lie, no lie!" screamed Mauria. "Stand out over there, Honoria, and let the gentlemen look at you!"

"I don't want to see her," shouted the Major.

"I have some curiosity," said Lord Gytrash. "Come forward, child, and let us look at you."

"There's bad light," said Mauria.

"Kerrigan, turn up the light," said the Major.

The man came forward with a long stick, and turned up the flame of the oil lantern that hung from the centre of the hall ceiling. Gas and electric light were alike unknown at Glyn.

"Step out, child," cried the old woman excitedly, "and show your face!"

So urged, Honoria flung herself forward, and stood with the light falling on her upturned brows and eyes.

"Hello!" cried Lord Gytrash.

The Major started as if a sword had pricked him, but said nothing.

"What do you say now?" said Mauria triumphantly. She had perceived the shock felt by the two men, and was keen to take advantage of it. "Whose face are you lookin' at, Major Turbary?"

"It is the face of a fine little girl," said Lord Gytrash. "A very interesting little girl; too good to be tramping about the country with you, ma'am."

"Aye," said Mauria, "it's what I have been tryin' to say. But myself doesn't know where she's to get rest for the sole of her foot unless the Turbarys are goin' to give it to her."

Lord Gytrash had talked to give his friend time to recover from the shock of a great surprise. The Major now spoke.

"The child is well enough to look at," he said; "but we have given you enough of our time for to-night. I have no objection to your staying here till to-morrow, both of you. The Turbarys were never inhospitable, and though I do not give lodgings to every tramp—— Here, Kerrigan, take these people to the housekeeper's quarters. Mrs. Brennan will see to them."

"Yes, your honour," said Kerrigan, and hustled the strangers out of the hall, lest the Major should recall his unexpected words of favour.

The gentlemen returned to the dining-room and had another smoke.

"You saw it?" said Lord Gytrash.

The Major nodded assent, but with a scowl.

"She's Finbarr's daughter, wherever she came from," said Lord Gytrash.

"I don't agree. You jump at a conclusion. There is certainly a likeness; but that is no reason——"

"Let us see her again in the morning!" said Lord Gytrash.

The Major shrugged his shoulders impatiently.

"I suppose I have put myself in for that," he said; "it's a disgusting piece of trouble."

"You are not committed to anything yet," said his friend. "You could hardly have sent them away at so late an hour, having kept them waiting all day to see you."

"I ought not to have seen them at all," said the Major.

"To-morrow is before you," said Lord Gytrash; "and meanwhile your housekeeper's hospitality will do nobody any harm."

But the Major finished his smoke in silence, and went to bed in a sulk.

CHAPTER IV

The Turbary Face

HONORIA slept soundly in the castle, which, if not that of her father, was at least belonging to one of his kindred; and she was out early in the morning, eager to survey her surroundings. She had climbed the cliffs, and had been down the rough beach to the verge of the tumbling waves long before she received notice that the Major was waiting to see her on the rocky terrace in front of the castle.

"I will see her in the full daylight," he said, "and without the old woman. I will not listen to another word of that old impostor's romancing."

Honoria, who, when out by herself in the open, had the ways of young goats, restrained her movements when she saw the two formidable men standing waiting for her approach, and came slowly towards them, erect and sedate. If she had been timid in the gloomy hall the night before, she was afraid of nothing now, in the sunshine, and with the sea breezes blowing round her.

The Major stood watching her approach with bent brows.

"Come here, child!" said Lord Gytrash.

She came on and stood before them in her poor, scanty clothing, her feet bare, and her hair blowing wildly about her shoulders.

"Come, now," said Lord Gytrash, "speak up and tell us who you are, and where you came from."

"I am Lady Honoria Turbary, and I came from Waterford, the country where my father used to live."

The Major was silent, and signed to his friend to continue his questioning.

"And who may your father be, little Lady Honoria?" said Lord Gytrash good-humouredly.

"My father is the Earl of Finbarr," said the girl simply.

"Can you tell me where he is at present, my little lady?"

"I can't tell that, indeed. He went in a ship to look for the North Pole——"

"And I hope he found it, and brought it back with him?"

Honoria threw back her head, and looked at the speaker in astonishment.

"It isn't a thing that you can take up in your hand and carry away," she said disdainfully.

"Oh, isn't it? I am very ignorant. Tell me what it is then."

"It is a place."

"A very hot place, I suppose."

"No, very cold. All over ice and snow."

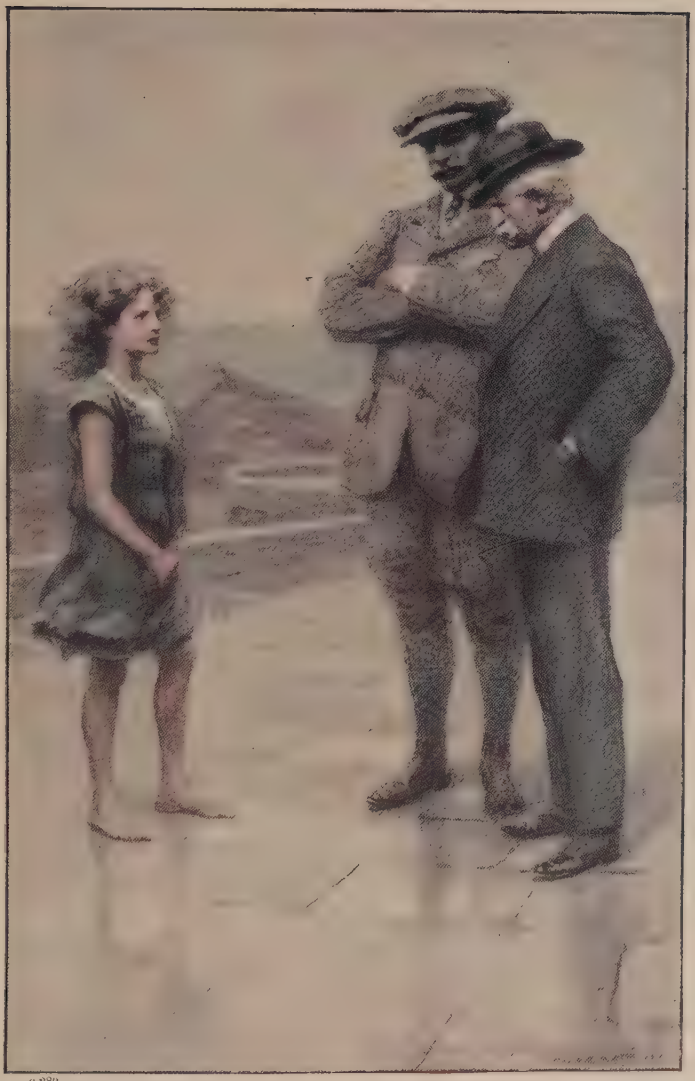
"An uncomfortable place, I see. Then I hope your father the Earl is soon coming back to you, Lady Honoria."

"I do not know; a great many people go out there and never come back."

"She has been well coached," growled the Major.

"Now, who has been telling you all this nonsense, my girl?" said Lord Gytrash.

"It isn't nonsense; it is the truth."



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A DAUNTLESS CLAIMANT

"Do you know what it is to tell a lie?" cried the Major excitedly.

"I have heard of it," said Honoria.

"Do you understand what a lie is?"

"A lie is what anyone tells who says I am not my father's child," said the girl, her young eyes growing stern, and fixing themselves boldly on the Major's angry countenance.

"I think we are getting the worst of it," said Lord Gytrash, smiling.

"Nonsense!" said the Major. "Now, Miss Impudence, you must put all this trash out of your head at once. You are not Lady Honoria Turbary, and if you call yourself so you will be laughed at."

"I don't care about that," said the girl. "I am the daughter of the Earl of Finbarr, and my name is Lady Honoria Turbary."

"Begone out of my sight, you impertinent minx!" shouted the Major. "If you ever say it again I will have you punished."

"But I will say it again. I will always say it," cried Honoria, stamping her foot.

The Major glared at her, and turned purple with anger.

"Go away, child," said Lord Gytrash hastily. "You have been taught to believe a falsehood. Go back to the castle, and the housekeeper will give you some dinner."

He put his hand through the Major's arm, and led him away, leaving Honoria standing alone, her face pale and set, her hands locked, full of determination to maintain the justice of her claim to recognition by her father's kinsman.

"Why are you so terribly disturbed about this

matter?" said Lord Gytrash, as they walked along. "Can't you take it quietly?"

"I could, if she were not the living image of him," said the Major.

"And if she is?"

"I can't have the creature going about the world with that Turbary face——"

"And the Earl's manner as well as his countenance," said Lord Gytrash with a short laugh. "I never saw one creature so exact a reproduction in miniature of another—boldness, temper, accent, all are there. And yet it is a feminine creature, with the blue of her eyes, and her carnations, and those ringlets—and the stamps of the foot!"

"Confound you!" cried the Major.

"I am confounded. Oh, I think you will have to take her up and do something for her, Major, however you manage it."

"How?—What?" stammered the Major.

"Cut off the title, of course, and make a little charity protégée of her. She will not cost you much. As she grows older she will forget her pretensions, and probably the likeness will disappear. It may be a coincidence, even now. The mother who came from 'out foreign' may have been a viking's daughter. With that physique Honoria might claim such antecedents. Or it may be that she is an original product of Waterford, miles away from the blood of the Turbarys, with a spirit of ancient heroes, though the grandchild, or grandniece, or anything you like, belonging to the old dame who brought her here to you."

"And am I to be burthened with that old beldam's progeny?" cried the Major.

"Bring her up to be a teacher in a school, or apprentice her to a milliner when she is old enough, or let her marry a small farmer. Let her live in your back premises, and eat your bread as a charity. This is the best advice I can give you, my friend, under the circumstances."

"It is hard to swallow," said the Major. "How would you like it, if the case were your own?"

"I am not sure that it would not amuse me in a wild place like this to have such a spirited little monkey frisking about within reach of a call, and yet not too near to be in my way. In some places it might be awkward—but not here. Why, you don't object to the goats that stand on the mud fence and stare at you, and when you approach them scamper away! Take this bold little wench as you take these, and I'll engage, as time goes on, she will take herself off somewhere, and prove little trouble to you."

"I couldn't let evil befall her—not if I undertake her," said the Major, bristling. "And then—a milliner, or a teacher, going about with that face of the Turbarys!"

"She may outgrow that face," said Lord Gytrash, ever pertinacious in justifying an opinion or theory he had once adopted; "and while she is outgrowing it she may as well be here—which is something like the idea you started with."

The Major grunted acquiescence, and chewed the bitter cud of his friend's unpalatable suggestion as they pursued their walk along the rough rock-ramparts of the little Turbary dominions. The sea was thundering on the beach below, and sending up clouds of vapour whiter than the flags of turf smoke that floated above

the grey stone hovels thatched with "scraws" (sods of withered grass and heather), mustering in twos and threes along the more inland seaboard.

Finally, as a result of the consultation between the friends, Mrs. Brennan, the housekeeper, was summoned by her master after lunch, and received certain instructions.

"Now Mrs. Brennan—this child, and this old woman——"

"Yes, sir."

"The old woman is to go out of this immediately, d' y' see——?"

"Yes, sir."

"The child may stay here till we see what can be done with her."

"Yes, sir."

The Major hesitated, an unusual thing for him, while the trained housekeeper waited like a soldier on duty.

"You have noticed something peculiar about the child?"

"We have all seen it, sir. There's three of us remember the Earl——"

"I haven't asked you anything about the Earl."

"I thought you meant it, sir."

"You have no right to think. Whatever the child may be it is as well to look after her a little."

"Yes, sir."

"The old woman has been telling you an outrageous story?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you will be making up romances about the girl?"

Mrs. Brennan was silent.

"You heard of a church vestry on fire, and registry books burnt?"

"Yes, sir."

"I'll go bail you did. Well, Mrs. Brennan, when you are building up your romance, remember you put that church into the middle of it."

"Yes, sir."

"And have a little common sense."

"Yes, sir."

"Send Kerrigan here till I talk to him."

"Yes, sir."

"And look here. Put the child into decent clothes, and crop her hair. And give her enough to eat. But don't let the old woman sleep another night under this roof, do you understand? There's a humbug in it somewhere, and she's sure to be at the bottom of it. And don't let this girl be always running among my feet, Mrs. Brennan."

"I'll look after it all, sir."

As the housekeeper retreated, Lord Gytrash sauntered out of the library, where he had been reading the English papers.

"So you have settled the business!" he said. "Nothing like the military for dispatch."

"An old fool is the worst of fools," said the Major "I suppose I've about parted with my peace of mind for ever."

"That's the suggestion of your fussy, fidgety Irish nature," said his friend, laughing. "Many a man in your place would be rather interested and amused——"

"Or in your place, you mean, as a looker-on. I must say you have put me in for a nice piece of business—a fine old house on my back!"

"Honour bright, old soldier! What about the Turbary face?"

"Oh, hang it!"

"Not that pretty face—even by court martial. Now, own up. You have a doubt in the back of your mind as to whether that old beggar's story may not be true."

The Major scowled, shifted in his chair, and suddenly blurted out:

"If it were not for the church on fire, and the books burnt, I might make it a question."

"I confess it's rather a sensational incident; but I have half a mind to make enquiries into the matter myself. The church was not in England."

"I would advise you not to meddle with it. One good turn deserves another, and as I have followed your advice, you ought to take mine."

"Hum!" said Lord Gytrash.

"Besides, you'll forget all about it once you've crossed the Channel," said the Major.

"That may be so indeed," said Lord Gytrash. "By the way, have you seen *The Times* this morning? There's a very interesting debate in the Lords. Something touching you, too; about the rights of owners of the land."

"Englishmen know nothing about Irish landowners," growled the Major. "Their own case is different."

"You are at the mercy of their guesses, at all events," said Lord Gytrash, "and you may as well throw in your lot with them. They have far more trouble about your affairs than about their own."

"Why aren't you there to settle the matter for me, then?"

"Because I suppose I'm more willing to enjoy an old friend's society than to fight for his fads."

"Nothing of the kind," said the Major. "It's because you are a lazy man, too rich and prosperous to be bitterly alive about anything."

"Hello!" cried Lord Gytrash, laughing. "Here is assault and battery in earnest. Hadn't you better put a pistol to my head?"

"You have no brains to blow out," replied the Major, smiling grimly.

CHAPTER V

Friends at the Castle

MAURIA returned to Mrs. O'Donovan that evening.

"Oh, my lamb, my lamb!" she mourned, rocking herself, with her head nearly between her knees, at Mildred's fireside. "I've left her forever with thim pair o' wolves!"

"Cheer up, Mauria!" said Mrs. O'Donovan. "Haven't you succeeded? Didn't you walk from Waterford to leave the child with her father's people?"

"I did," said the old woman; "but not to see them take her with a slight on her. That ould Major will make no more count of her than if she was a dog or a cat at the fire in the housekeeper's room."

"You've got her there," said Mildred, "and you must leave the rest to God. And besides, she is one to work things out for herself, under Providence."

"I don't know that, for it's the haughty tongue is in her. And if she hasn't the right to it, who has? Oh, how will I go and leave her to them?"

Heber was kneeling on the hearth staring at the fire, and his eyes were shining as he suddenly turned them on Mauria.

"I will look after her," he said.

"God bless you, boy! what use would you be?"

"Leave her to me and you'll see," said the boy.

"Oh, Mrs. O'Donovan, dear madam, he manes well, but if the Major caught him spying round there, it's

worse things would be instead of better. It's yourself that would be wiser to know how to keep an eye to her widout rousin' up that ould tiger's temper at her."

"We'll do our best, Mauria, never fear," said Mrs. O'Donovan. "And now all you can do more for her is to pray for her, and go home in peace to your own daughter and your grandchildren."

"Oh, and if it wasn't for the nature that is in me for them would I ever stir out of Connaught again, while the breath is in me, but sit watchin' that ould villain of a Major to see what he is goin' to do for the daughter of the Earl of Finbarr, and her the Lady Honoria Turbary in her own lawful right to the back of it!"

"I'm glad you have to go, whether you like it or not," said Mildred; "for I think you would be sure to make mischief if you stayed in this neighbourhood. If the girl has a chance of making Major Turbary her friend, it is by remaining in his hands without interference from anyone. He is a man who knows how to be kind by surprise, although his temper is tyrannical. And I shall let you know from time to time how things are going."

With this Mauria had to be satisfied, and after a comforting stay of some weeks in the little farm-house she departed one day, weeping, for her own poor home in the county of Waterford. It had not been difficult after all to see Honoria for a last good-bye, for the Major had begun to fulfil Mauria's prophecy by taking no further notice of the girl or her comings and goings. As he had not seen old Mauria's face again since the night her presence had so irritated him, he had already forgotten her.

But Honoria had friends at Glyn Castle.

"You come into my room, my little lady," said Mrs.

Brennan on the afternoon of the day when she had received her master's directions as to her treatment of the new inmate. She had found the girl standing alert, like a young deer prepared to take flight to some inaccessible lair of its own among the crags and mists and clouds.

Honoria drew back a step and looked at the woman questioningly.

"You are welcome to this castle, my little Lady Honoria Turbary," said the housekeeper.

"That is my name; I am the daughter of the Earl of Finbarr——"

"I know it, my darling. But even great little ladies have to be children first of all, and do what they are told. You must come with me now and have some tea, and a cake that's in the oven for you, and I have to get you a frock."

Honoria still hesitated.

"You are not making fun of me?" she said, looking at Mrs. Brennan searchingly. "Those cruel men laughed. Why am I to stay here if he does not believe in me?"

"It's a great surprise to the Major," said Mrs. Brennan, "and he doesn't know anything about children. But he wants you to stay here, and I am to take care of you. You must try not to get in his way too much, or to worry him. He's not always as bad as he sounds——"

"He does sound dreadfully badly," assented Honoria.

"That is not just what I meant," said Mrs. Brennan. "But perhaps he'll get fond of you when he gets used to you."

"I don't want him to be fond of me," said Honoria; "I couldn't be fond of him, because he sent Mauria away

from me. He thinks she cheated him, and he believes I told him lies. My father's cousin ought to be a better man than that."

"He's giving you a home, my lady."

"He hasn't said so. And I wouldn't stay if I was big When I am grown up I will go away and work. Mauria is too poor to keep me; she has a lot of hungry grandchildren. If I could eat grass like the goats, I wouldn't take anything from anybody."

"Pride is a sin, my little lady."

"I wouldn't be proud if people would let me love them. I wasn't proud with Mauria, because I love her. When she said I ought to be with my father's people, I knew it was right; but I thought they would be kind people."

"Well, your ladyship, there are kind people in Glyn Castle, who would love you if you let them. There's two sides to it. There isn't much love to be got in the world by holding on to hardness."

Honoria still stood aloof, with that shadow across her young brows which made her look so like the lost earl, who had suffered wrong, and had gone away cold at heart to the icy regions that seemed congenial to him. The aroused bitterness within her was not yet subdued. Mrs. Brennan stood waiting and watching her with wonder. The evening had set in with frost, and the child's clothing was poor and insufficient. Her bare feet were blue with cold, and her features were pinched.

"I never seen one so stubborn," thought the housekeeper. "We're going to have a handful of her. Will your ladyship condescend to come into the castle?" she said presently. "I'm adapted to the rheumatism, and the night's coming on cold."

"Oh," said Honoria, "I didn't know that! I'll come with you, Mrs. Brennan. I'm dreadfully sorry if I've hurt you."

Mrs. Brennan could scarcely believe her eyes and ears. The haughty little lady was gone, and here was a soft-faced little creature putting a hand in hers, and looking at her with eyes of tender penitence. She gathered the little hand in her own, and led the way to the back door, which was the entrance to the servants' quarters.

"It's the shortest way in," she said, perceiving that the child shrank at crossing the threshold.

"I know it's the way allowed for me," said Honoria quietly.

Kerrigan and the cook, who were the other two who remembered the Earl, were standing at the fire in the housekeeper's room, waiting to receive the waif whose cause they had at once adopted.

"Your ladyship is welcome," said Kerrigan, bowing low, while the cook placed a seat for her at the fire and drew back with a curtsy.

Honoria regarded them with the same doubting eyes that had questioned Mrs. Brennan's overtures of friendship. She looked round at these well-dressed, comfortable persons, and then down at her own bare, mud-stained feet, the feet that Heber had washed in his mother's little farm-house. She was an earl's daughter, and they were her kinsman's servants. Were they not mocking her as a liar and an impostor, as their master had done?

"Thank you," she said with childish dignity, and sat down in the chair that had been placed for her. It was Mrs. Brennan's own armchair, the best in the

housekeeper's room, and the girl noticed quickly that they were all standing while she alone was seated.

Kerrigan came and stood a little behind her chair, and clearing his throat respectfully, began to speak.

"It's myself and Mrs. Brennan here that remember your noble father the Earl, your ladyship. Right well we remember him, could pick him out of a whole monarchy of kings, and nobility, and—emperors, for the matter of that, if they were marchin' past us!"

Honoria jumped up and turned right round, facing the speaker.

"Oh, Mr. Kerrigan, if you remember him so well, do tell me what he was like!" she cried, suddenly forgetting her ill-treatment and her dignity.

"Well, my lady, if you ever looked in a lookin'-glass, or if it was only in the bog-pool itself, you'd see one that is the living image of him."

Honoria clapped her hands impatiently. "But that's only a girl's face, and a man does not look like that," she cried.

"It isn't every man that can look like a child and be a great, fine man at the same time; nor it isn't every little girsha that has the looks of a child, an' has the print of a strong, grand nobleman on her countenance all the wanst. And that 's what you have, your little ladyship, and it 's why none of us here wants any more words to it to say what y' are—that you 're the daughter of the Earl of Finbarr that 's come amongst us."

Honoria listened, meekly downcast, to this burst of fealty. Her pride fled before confidence and kindness.

"I know I am like him," she said, "or I should have been sent back to Waterford with Mauria. But if I

am kept here at all, why am I not treated as my father's child ought to be treated?"

"Well, now, your ladyship, take heart, and don't be frettin' yourself over the kernaptious ways of an ould bachelor that 'd think the world was at an end if a child, let alone a girl-child, was to run across his path. If you're in the Castle, sure you're in it, and what are we all here for but to wait on you an' make y' comfortable?"

"Thank you, Mr. Kerrigan," said the little girl softly, and dropped into her chair again.

"God help her!" whispered the cook, "it's cryin' she is!"

"Whisht!" said Kerrigan. "Will you be smart and get ready the bit o' supper for her."

Honoria slept that night in the housekeeper's bedroom, where an impromptu couch had been put up for her, pending better arrangements. The next day she was given her choice of apartments, Mrs. Brennan taking her round the big, scantily furnished, lonesome bedrooms, with the raving sea framed in the rattling windows of one, and the bare, stern mountains frowning over at another; all of them with four-post gaunt beds, hung with dark curtains that looked as if they would drop in pieces if they were shaken.

"She wouldn't have any of them," said Mrs. Brennan, talking matters over with Kerrigan. "Nothing would do her but to go sky-high in the tower, where I can give her nothing to lie on but a stretcher bed and a few pegs to hang her bits of clothes on—not much of the same will she have to inconvenience her. But with all that she was astonished at the furniture of the rooms.

"'When Mauria told me stories of castles,' she says, 'she always put beautiful things in them.'

"'Well, my lady,' I says, 'Mauria was talkin' about rich castles; but there is no rich castles in Connaught. If the Major is hard, he's poor, I'll say that for him.'

"'Is he poor?' she says, opening thim big eyes of hers at me.

"'He's poor in his own way,' says I.

"'Then,' says she, 'I'll cost him as little as I can. I won't eat much. Mauria thought he would give me some education. I suppose it would be too dear; and I wouldn't like to go to school. They wouldn't have me there unless I had a lot of things that I couldn't get. But I want to be educated; Mauria says I'll be no kind of use to myself without it. Are there any books in this castle, Mrs. Brennan, that I could learn out of?'

"'Bless us, child,' I says, 'Connaught's no place to look for books in, unless it be the ould, ancient books that was buried in the bogs when learnin' was made a lawful crime of. And they're so precious now that they're kept in iron safes, for fear anyone would get a look at them. As for this castle, there isn't a book inside of it unless the *Peerage*, or one or two about fishin' an' shootin', and another about games of cards.'

"With that she sighed, and says she: 'When my father comes home I don't want him to find me a dunce,' says she.

"That gave me a surprise, and I said: 'Do you expect your father the Earl to be comin' home, your ladyship?'

"'Of course I do,' she says. 'He'll come home a great man, and everybody will be talking about him. You don't think he would stay to spend his whole life

out there in the ice and snow? And I like this high-up room,' she says, 'because I can see out, out so far into the sea and the white clouds, and think I am looking at the white world that he sailed away into.'"

"God pity her!" said Kerrigan. "It's never likely that her father the Earl would come home. Has he a home to come to? An' him goin' to the ends o' the earth with his heart broke, thinkin' wife and child had died on him, as Mauria was tellin' us. But, howsomever, let her think it, the little crature! It'll do her no harm to be dhramin' that she has a father at her back in this cold world to the orphan, and that he'll come to her some day with a crown on his head, and set her up beside him on a throne o' gold. Sure it's all in the fairy tales, and they're fit for the likes of her."

CHAPTER VI

"What is the Use of Me, Then?"

It did not take Mrs. Brennan very long to obey her master's orders as to the clothing of Honoria, but she was careful not to hint to him that clothes were articles that have to be bought with money. She made use of materials at her hand, and Honoria helped her, working amain with needle and thread, feeling a thrill of triumph when she found herself encased in something more conventionally proper than the peasant child's crimson flannel petticoat. The result was a shock to the Major when he caught sight of her by accident as she scampered along the cliffs on her way to show herself in her new apparel to the O'Donovans.

"Kerrigan," he said, "what was that figure I saw before me on the rocks—a boy—seemed like a gentleman's son? Are there any new people in the neighbourhood?"

"No, your honour. Not a saint nor a sinner."

'You rascal, do you mean that I have lost my eyesight?"

"No, Major. Myself would be sorry to be the mark you'd shoot at. If it was the case of a girl, sir, I might be guessin' that it was her little ladyship you've seen, since Mrs. Brennan has fixed her up in obedience to your honour's instructions, sir."

"Then she has put her into a boy's clothes, and rigged her out in expensive style, with an air of grandeur that will turn her head——"

"Truth, your honour, the grandeur's in herself, as it ought to be, seein' the stock she has come out of. And as for the boy part of it, your honour's self gave orders to have the girl's hair of her cut short. Then divil the expense was in it, for Mrs. Brennan told me that it was a piece of blue serge she had in the press to make herself a gownd of, an' because it was handy she cut it up for the little girsha. Short it is on the child when all was got out of the piece; but then she had a lovely pair of red stockings that she knitted for a niece that she has in England, and she clapped her little ladyship's legs into them, with a cap to match the stockin's that was to have gone to England with them, but will have to be knitted over again when she gets the wool from Galway."

"Confound you, will you hold your tongue, Kerrigan!" shouted the Major. "If I had you before a court martial I would have you shot for gabbling."

"Aye, or for less, Major," said Kerrigan with a friendly grin. "But if you did you'd be wringin' your hands over my dead body the next minute, when you were lookin' for your specs or your snuff-box an' nobody could find them for you. 'Ochone! why did I kill Kerrigan?' your honour would be cryin'. 'It's him that was the useful rapscallion to me!'"

"Begone, sir, or I'll throw this clothes-brush at your head," roared the Major, and Kerrigan departed from the dressing-room, smiling, while the dinner gong rang.

Honoria had permission from Mrs. Brennan to stay the night at Mrs. O'Donovan's, seeing that it did not

matter where she spent her time, so long as she was safe. She never doubted that she would be welcome there, and was in no haste to end her walk, or, rather, her race, above the high cliffs and the tumbling waves, and across the narrow beaten paths and stepping-stones which led her across the bog as the bird flies, and which she discovered for herself and pursued with a sense of adventure. The short winter afternoon was nearly over when she arrived at the door of the little farm-house. It was closed on the gathering evening mists, but she could hear voices within as she stood for a moment, realizing that she was after all a stranger and an intruder, and feeling the sharp pang of loneliness as an outsider from all firesides, one who has no actual home or kindred. Only a moment, and then the little knuckles were on the door.

Heber had returned from school and was conning his evening lessons. The tea-table was spread in the house-place, and the kettle was singing. Even the cat and the dog sitting on the hearth seemed to have made up their minds that the fuss of the day was over, and that there was nothing for an intelligent animal to do but to wink at the blaze and watch the sparks flying up the chimney.

Heber had just looked up from his Greek grammar, and said to his mother:

"I went as near the Castle to-day as I dared, but I did not see a sign of her. If you hadn't warned me I would have walked in and asked what they were doing to her."

"I am glad you were wise. You might have done harm. What are you afraid of? The Major is not an ogre."

"He is ogre enough to some people," said Heber.

Here the dog jumped up and barked, and the little knuckles were heard on the door panel.

"I bet it's herself!" cried Heber, and he flung down his book, and was quickly upon the latch.

"It's me," said the girl, appearing in the doorway.

Mother and son drew back. For a moment they did not recognize her. Then it flashed on them both that it was she, and that she was changed. She looked like a beautiful boy who would make a study for a young Archangel Michael.

"The Lady Honoria Turbary!" said Mrs. O'Donovan, recovering herself.

"No, no, only Noreen!" cried the girl, throwing her arms round Mrs. O'Donovan's neck. "I left the other name at the Castle, where it is my right. Oh, dear madam, will you let me stay with you till to-morrow? Mrs. Brennan said I might do so if you asked me."

"Gladly will I ask you, dear; but what will Major Turbary say when he hears of it?"

"He won't hear; he won't know; he doesn't care," said Honoria, throwing off her cap and shaking out her short curly locks.

"What has become of your beautiful hair?" cried Heber, staring at her, scarcely able to find her identity in her complete state of transformation.

"The Major ordered it off," she said, "and I am glad to be rid of it. I'm more like Heber now."

And then Honoria laughed. It was her first laugh since she had come to Connaught. It became her delightfully, but Heber and his mother were startled by the sound of it. The little stern, sad mortal they had pitied was gone. This was altogether another creature.

After tea they sat round the blazing turf, and Honoria asked Heber to show her the books he was studying.

"These are my lessons for Mr. Ferrall," he said. "They don't teach books like these at the National School."

"I know they don't," said Honoria. "I wish I had a Mr. Ferrall to teach me."

"Perhaps he would teach you too," said Heber. "I'll ask him. And Mother would give you lessons; wouldn't you, Mother?"

"Whenever you come here we can have a lesson," said Mildred.

"And, oh, Mother, do teach her the harp! Don't you love music, Lady Honoria?"

"Noreen, Noreen!" cried the girl. "Call me Noreen. I love music, but the only harp I ever heard had half the strings broken. It was an old man's, and he carried it about the country as long as he could walk. The people gave him his dinner for a tune. Then there was an old piper, and when he came round we all danced. Some girls used to sing in the fields, but the larks beat them. And there's music in the wind at night too; I often stayed awake to hear it," said Noreen, nursing her knee and looking into the fire.

"Mother's harp is better than all that," said Heber proudly.

The next morning, when he was putting his books in his satchel, he said: "Come along with me to Mr. Ferrall, and we'll see about your lessons." And Mrs. O'Donovan consenting, the boy and girl set off together.

It was a mile of travel along the cliffs, and then half a mile into a little valley that was only half bog, the rest

being as green as a lady's lawn. Mr. Ferrall's house stood on the green part, and he held it from a landlord who was different in some respects from Major Turbary. He allowed the tenants to have free firing from the bog, and free wrack-manure for their tillage out of the sea. It may be that he was a richer man, but riches do not always make people generous. Mr. Ferrall believed he would be generous if he had wealth, and so do many others; but who can tell what new ideas are admitted to council when power takes matters in hand? Wealth being out of the question, it was his fad to do all the good he could find to be done, according to his ideas of what was good. Fortunately for Heber he thought it good to help the education of a clever lad under difficulties. He had met the boy while searching for botanical specimens in the short grass straggling among the stones of the curve of beach at the foot of his valley, and had been struck by his unusual intelligence. An invitation to come and see his collections had brought them into closer acquaintance; and after a time Ferrall had dropped into a pleasant habit of lecturing the lad, and ended by giving him regular instruction on certain evenings of the week.

The exterior of Mr. Ferrall's house was hardly as raw and bare as that of the Castle. It was backed by a few low-growing oak trees, and surrounded on three sides by a hedge of scarlet fuchsia, which made a girdle of warmth round the white walls, with their caps of steel-grey roof-slates. His sitting-room was half a library and half a museum, treasuring all the specimens of fauna and flora to be found along the seaboard, besides strange rock formations and shells, and even samples of the "elve stones" respected by the people as having

fallen from heaven (which is a fact true enough, as they are fragments of meteorites).

It required only a glance along the titles of his books to see that Mr. Ferrall was a philosopher. After that it would be hard to guess from which philosopher he held his creed, seeing that he had a philosophy of his own which just tolerated all of them and joined issue with none. For the rest, he had seen life from many points of view. He was a Cambridge University man, had been attached to the Austrian embassy, and had led a club life in London; and no one now in touch with him knew what wave of strange circumstance had washed him up on this strip of Connaught seaboard, like the seadrift on a reef of the rocks after a night of storm.

Whatever his theories and habits of study of men and things might be, he had been sufficiently weary of them to feel a thrill of interest leap up in his life when he tapped the spring of Heber's young mind and character and found the waters strong and refreshing.

On this particular morning when the children arrived, they were informed by Ferrall's housekeeper that her master had gone for a walk, but had left a message that if young O'Donovan turned up he was to wait for his return. Mrs. Giles was an Englishwoman who knew more of her master's antecedents than anyone living, and had followed him to this desert spot as if lashed to the mast of a wreck. She kept his house spotlessly neat, even to the extent of protecting his hall from the soil of his own shoe soles. His slippers always stood on the mat while he was out-of-doors, and he was too well trained to neglect to replace them by his boots the moment he recrossed his threshold. That he did so

with a curious smile on his worn face might be taken as a proof that obedience to the faithful Giles was a principle contained in his philosophy. Her indignation had been great when her master had first "taken up with the farmer's boy", after having neglected to cultivate the acquaintance of gentry who had driven twenty miles to call on him. But there had come a day when she owned that the young face at the lonely door had grown to be a joy to her. That was when Heber had been ill, and a month had passed without bringing him, Ferrall having visited him meanwhile at his mother's farm-house. And from that day forth the boy had been as welcome to Mrs. Giles as to her master.

The children spent their hour of waiting in tramping the beach and perching on one rock crag after another above the wintry surf.

"I want to go out there and find Father," said Honoria, pointing to the far horizon, all white and grey with storm clouds and the mist of turbulent waves that kept racing back and forward over a seemingly illimitable ocean, like creatures enraged at being sent on an impossible errand to overrun a land-world that resisted them.

"A girl couldn't," said Heber, "but I mean to go."

"Why can't a girl do whatever a boy can do?" asked Honoria.

"A boy couldn't either, but a man could, and I'll be a man by and by. A girl grows up into only a woman, and a woman is never as strong as a man."

"I am as strong as you now," said Honoria. "I could wrestle with you. Stand up and try me."

"I wouldn't wrestle with a girl," said Heber; "it isn't manly."

"What is the use of me, then?" asked Honoria despairingly.

"Oh, there's a lot of use! Look at my mother; isn't there use for her——?"

"Knitting," said Honoria, "and kindness. It's nice for us. But I want to go to that North Pole in a ship. They've always got boys in ships to pull the ropes, and I could pull as well as anybody. And when we met Father's ships all blocked up in the ice, I could point him out to them and tell them who he was. And he would leave his own old, swamped-up boat and come on to ours. And then he would say: 'This is my daughter who has come to find me!' And I should bring him home, and we should all be happy ever after."

"I've a better plan than that," said Heber. "I'm going in an airship."

"That will be fine!" cried Honoria. "And you must take me with you."

"I can't promise: it will all depend on a lot of things. Mr. Ferrall says there is a good chance that we shall be able before very long to go everywhere on the air as the birds do. Andrée tried it for the North Pole, but it was only in a balloon. Still, he may be living among the Eskimos along with your father at the present moment."

"But wouldn't they come home?"

"They may have broken their legs, or something, and not be able to travel till we go for them."

"Oh, oh!" cried Honoria.

"Now don't be a silly girl!" said Heber. "A man does not mind having his legs broken if he was doing something great when it happened."

"But I should mind."

"Then it proves that you are not fit to go on an expedition—you should be prepared for everything. You ought to stay at home like the little fishermen's girls over there, and mend the nets."

"I don't want to mend nets. My father has no nets to mend. He is not a fisherman."

"No, he is an Arctic explorer, and you will have to stay and wait for him here till we come back."

"If we were in a fairy tale I could make a huge net and cast it over the whole ocean and catch him in it, and haul him over all the seas in the world, and land him on these rocks."

"Well, we don't live in a fairy tale," said Heber. "Nobody does. But there are far finer things to be done than the fairy tales know anything about. I mean to do some of them."

"And why can't I? It's rather unkind of you to want to keep them all to yourself. I could help you."

"So you could. But you'll have to go on being a girl. I don't want another boy. I'm a boy myself. You are to do girls' things, and I'm to do boys' things. I cut turf for my mother, and dig and plant. Those are all man things, and are not for you. And besides, you are Lady Honoria Turbary."

"Because my father is the Earl of Finbarr. Only for that I don't care about being a lady anybody. Your mother is a lady, and she hasn't got a title."

"And my father was a good man, though he wasn't what is called a nobleman."

Honoria stood gazing out at the foamy horizon across the racing white waves that had such a fascination for her. She took up a smooth flat stone and shot it side-

ways out to sea, where it went skipping over the waters, and finally was lost in a breaker.

"Are all the poor men in the world good," she asked suddenly, "and all the gentlemen bad?"

"Oh, no!" said Heber. "For one, Mr. Ferrall is good."

"Are the fishermen in those dreadfully poor little houses over there good or bad?" persisted Honoria.

"I dare say some of them are good, and some middling. I believe none of them have time to be bad," said Heber.

"Does it take a lot of time?"

"I think it mostly takes idleness."

"Major Turbary has plenty of time," said Honoria.

CHAPTER VII

Among the Fisher-People

MR. FERRALL'S little place was called Seagull Lodge, because in rough weather the gulls came up to his windows looking for food, and were not disappointed. By the time the children returned, the master was in his library, waiting for them.

"You stay here till I speak to him," said Heber. He took off his shoes, leaving them on the doorstep, and went into the library in his stocking feet.

"Now, little missy, give me your shoes till I wipe them," said Mrs. Giles.

"Are shoes unlucky?" asked Honoria.

"Not that I know," said Mrs. Giles; "but they're dirty in a house after they have been through the bogs."

"You may keep mine if you like," said Honoria.

"You're a sharp little missy, wherever you come from," said Mrs. Giles. "But I don't want your shoes. They wouldn't fit me."

"I'd rather go without them, only that I am an earl's daughter, and I must be decent," said Honoria.

"Oh, law! Did I ever hear! Is the child mad, or only saucy?" wondered Mrs. Giles. "Sit down there on a step of the stairs—we have no room for hall seats—till I put on your shoes again, missy."

Meanwhile Heber was standing before Mr. Ferrall, eager to make his request.

"I've brought you a girl, sir, and she is longing to learn something, sir. Will you let her have lessons with me?"

"A girl! What kind of a girl, Heber?"

"She is a clever little girl, sir. Not much of a girl, but very like a boy."

"You think that a recommendation," said Mr. Ferrall, smiling.

"It's less trouble, sir, and she would like to be a boy."

"Let me see her. Where is she now?"

"Mrs. Giles is at her shoes, sir."

"I see. She knows how to conform to rules."

"She's had a lot of hard times, sir."

"Where does she come from? Is she one of the fishermen's children?"

"No, sir, not at all, sir. She's the Lady Honoria Turbary, Mr. Ferrall."

"Oh!"

Mr. Ferrall drew a long breath, and looked first astonished, then more deeply concerned.

"I have been hearing of this child," he said. "She is related to Major Turbary?"

"She is the daughter of the Earl of Finbarr."

"And the Major is her father's cousin?"

"Yes, sir."

"And he has taken her to live at the Castle?"

"He lets her stay there, sir, but he doesn't care about her. And she says she doesn't want to grow up a dunce, Mr. Ferrall."

"But will the Major not send her to school?"

"She says he won't. He is poor, and school is too dear. And there's no such thing as a book in the Castle, sir."

Ferrall laughed.

"Sharp little girl to have found that out already. Well, let me see her. Probably Mrs. Giles has done with her by this time."

Heber went to fetch her, and found her waiting patiently on the mat outside the door.

"Will you please to come in, Lady Honoria?" he said, speaking in a high key for the benefit of (perhaps) Mrs. Giles.

Honoria came in, taking off her cap as she had seen Heber do, and Ferrall smiled, remembering that this was a girl who would like to be a boy, because it gave less trouble. And he acknowledged that she looked very like a boy. But then, having welcomed her encouragingly, he perceived that her eyes responded to his kindness with quite a feminine sweetness.

"So you want to join our lessons, Lady Honoria," said Ferrall. "What have you been learning? Have you ever been to school?"

"I've been at the National School ever since I could speak," said Honoria. "I know everything they've got there. I want to know the things that they never teach."

"That is a large order," said Ferrall. "I wish I knew everything that nobody teaches. But what things, for instance?"

"History. Real geography—more than a little peep at maps. And I want to know about the great people who wrote books, and painted pictures, and fought battles, and went to sea in ships, and discovered countries——"

"Take breath, take breath," said Mr. Ferrall, laughing. "On my word, you are ambitious! How do you know I can teach you about all those things?"

"I told her, sir," put in Heber.

"So you have been giving me a character as a man who knows everything?"

"And languages, Mr. Ferrall. We both want to learn all the languages you know yourself, sir."

"I see I have a busy time before me. To begin with—have you prepared your lesson for to-day in Greek?"

"I have, sir. But there's a word I don't quite understand."

"Let us get at it."

Honoria was provided with a seat at the fire and a book while Heber's lesson went on, but Ferrall could see that she was listening attentively to the instruction. When the talk arising out of the lesson touched on the Greek heroes she sat up, with her chin raised and her eyes widened.

Ferrall met her glance.

"What were you going to say?" he asked, smiling.

"Those *were* men!" said Honoria.

"You shall hear more about them," said Ferrall. "I will give you a chapter of history to learn for to-morrow."

Honoria's eyes flashed with joy.

"Oh, thank you!" she said.

"Is there anything you would like to ask me before I have to send you away, for the days are shortening?"

"About languages, sir."

"Well?"

Honoria hesitated.

"Out with it! I know you have a question in your mind burning to get out on your tongue."

"Do you know the language that the Eskimos speak, Mr. Ferrall?"

"No, I don't. There you have me: I knew you would find out my ignorance."

"It's because she wants to go and find her father," said Heber.

"I see now why she would like to be a boy."

'I will go a girl," said Honoria.

"Well," said Ferrall, "I think that if you were once among the Eskimos you would make them understand that you were looking for someone. Have you been reading about the Eskimos?"

"My school teacher used to read me bits from the newspapers about the explorers. There are people in Waterford who loved my father."

"We'll look up the arctic regions to-morrow," said Mr. Ferrall. "Come early, and don't be too late getting across the cliffs and the bog. We must reckon with the daylight, although we have more of that than have the Eskimos."

After this the lessons at Seagull Lodge went on every morning. Heber found that he was "out of his time" at the National School, and his travels across the bog in another direction having ceased, he was able to take full advantage of Mr. Ferrall's kindness. At a certain point on his way he was met by Honoria, who had all freedom to spend her hours where she pleased, and was henceforth received at the Lodge as a second pupil.

"I want to go and see those fisher-people over there above the beach," said Honoria. "They can't go fishing now; it's too stormy. What do they eat when they can't get any fish?"

The children, after leaving the Lodge, often spent the rest of the daylight exploring the country, scarcely

getting under roof cover before the darkness overtook them, and sometimes depending on the stars to light them home.

"There is always a little smoke," said Honoria, "so they must have a fire."

"And they pay dear for it," said Heber. "Major Turbary makes them pay for the turf they take out of the bog."

"And what do they eat?"

"Oh, they have a few potatoes! And they cost them dear, too. Major Turbary makes them pay for the sea wrack to manure them. They get it when the high tide comes in. The girls go into the sea up to their necks, and haul it in; and then they have to pay for it. But they soon eat up the potatoes, and they are all done."

"And when they have no fish and no potatoes——?"

"Then they walk miles for a bag of meal, and carry it home on their backs. The shops in the town give them credit, and they have to pay that up too."

"Where do they get the money to pay?"

"Oh, I don't know! Some of them go to England and Scotland and earn a little at the harvest. And they pinch while they are away, and bring it home to Major Turbary."

"And still they say he's poor," said Honoria.

"Mother says there's different kinds of poor. But I think he is very comfortable. There's a lot of things in the world you can't account for, and some of them must be wrong. I mean to put a lot of them right when I am old enough. Nobody would mind me now——"

"No, nor me," said Honoria. "It takes grown-up people to be listened to."

"What annoys me is," said Heber, "that by the time they are grown-up enough to be listened to, they change their minds. There's Parliament: Mother reads the papers, and she has patience with some of the speeches. I don't know how she can; I couldn't."

"I hope you won't change your mind too."

"Catch me," said Heber.

"I won't, either," said Honoria; "not if it means that a man who lives comfortably in a castle is to get all the money."

"If your father's people had behaved well your father would have been living comfortably in a castle too," said Heber; "and so would you, Lady Honoria."

"He wouldn't have taken all the money; and neither would I. He wouldn't make girls pay for going up to their necks in water in the high tide, for a few potatoes——"

"Oh, well, here we are where you wanted to go!"

They were coming down on some small, grey cabins, as grey and rude as the rock reefs among which they were scattered, and the wild, stony beach where the boats were lying out of work. Little bare-legged children, in scanty clothing of home-made flannel, were climbing in and out of the boats at play; and here and there a woman not much better dressed put her head out of a smoky doorway to take a critical look at any visitors who might be approaching. All round the little settlement was an atmosphere of blue smoke and white surf, and the air was redolent of the pungent fragrance of burning peat and the salt breath of the sea. A few men and girls were sitting on an upturned boat, mending nets.

"It's Heber O'Donovan," said one of the men. "But who's the other?"

"A fine boy, God bless him!" exclaimed one of the girls.

"He'll not be finer than Heber, whoever he is," said a second man.

"Maybe not," replied another girl. "But there's somethin' to be said for him. It's in a beautiful boyhood he is."

They were talking in Irish, of course, and as Heber and Honoria were both familiar with the language, they were soon in friendly conversation with the fisher-people.

"Shan Lacey," shouted Heber, "when are you going to catch a whale? Sure when you do we'll all be rich. A lot of the islands are catching them."

"When this coast pushes out and turns into an island we'll do it," said an old man in a battered sou'wester. "But all the same, if we did, the Major would swallow the whale on us."

"The whale might swallow him."

"Faix, an' if it did it wouldn't like him," said Lacey with a grin. "It would soon give the Major back to us, so it would, Heber. An' I couldn't blame it. I wouldn't like to make my supper of the Major, myself."

"It's smaller fish than whales we'd be content to catch this minute," said a younger man; "but with the sea boilin' like a pot, and ne'er a harbour or a pier, it's little use the ocean is to the like of us."

"True for you," said Lacey.

"Why don't they build you a harbour?" said Honoria.

"I would like you to ask them why, young gentle-

man," said the old man. "It's little answer they would give you."

"I'm not a young gentleman," said Honoria. "If I were, I'd make them answer me."

"Maybe you're a farmer's son then, my boy," said Lacey; "an' if y'are, sure you might as well hold your tongue."

"I'm not a farmer's son, nor a boy at all," said Honoria; "I'm only a girl, and Heber thinks I'm very little use. But if I were a rich man I would build you a harbour."

The girls and boys now came flocking round Honoria.

"So, it's true for her! A girl she is! What put a boy in your heads, you foolish creatures?" said a mother of six children, coming on the scene with her baby. "An' will you tell me, dear, who are you, and what in under heaven brought you here to this hungry end o' Connaught?"

"She is the Lady Honoria Turbary," said Heber.

"Turbary, is it?" cried a woman.

"Turbary, it is," said Heber.

"An' what is the Major to her?"

"Bad to her," said Heber.

"Isn't she his own flesh and blood?"

"He's my father's cousin."

"And who is your father, dear?"

"A good man; but he's far away from me. If he were here, he would make you a harbour. But we have to do without him till he comes back from the North Pole."

"A pole! That's something like a mast. He's a seafaring man, then."

"That he is," said Honoria; "and that's why I wanted to see you. Hebér brought me. I live at the Castle now, but I don't stay there much. I go to Mrs. O'Donovan, and to Mr. Ferrall with Heber."

"Them's a good pair," said Lacey. "Madam's the best that lives, and Mr. Ferrall is a good man, and kind to the poor; but he isn't a landlord. I wish it was him that oursel's were under. Sure the good people never have much money in this world, I'm thinkin'."

"Ah, well!" said a woman, "if that's His way, itself, God's keepin' it for them till they get to Heaven! And we'll all have enough the day we die."

"Not when we're leavin' hungry childher behind us," said a mother of seven.

"For shame to you, Bridget, to be wantin' to take the management out of the Almighty's hands. I wonder you wouldn't be afraid, an' Him listenin' to you."

"Come in and eat a potato, childher," said a mother of nine. "What but y' would be perished with hunger, and you tramping the rocks these hours ago, if you came by the Castle from Madam O'Donovan's."

"But it's their dinner," said Honoria, looking at the little red-toed children standing round with big, hungry eyes, staring at the visitors.

"So, itself, sure there's enough for everybody as long as it lasts."

"You must eat with them," whispered Heber. "They'll be miserable if you don't."

And then they went into a smoky cabin, where the potatoes were "teemed" on a little rickety table, and the children all sat round, anyhow, and ate the smoking potatoes in their brown skins out of their hands, as apples are sometimes eaten plucked from an orchard tree.

CHAPTER VIII

"On Her Own Wing"

COMING along the cliffs in the dusk one evening, the children met Lord Gytrash with his gun and his dogs, returning after a day's war on the plovers. He was highly amused at seeing Honoria's transformation, and stopped to talk to her, taking no notice of Heber.

"The Lady Honoria Turbary," he said, taking off his hat. "I hope your ladyship is satisfied with Glyn. How does she find life at the Castle?"

"I scarcely find it at all. I don't live there much," said Honoria.

"What! How so? Where do you live then, madam?"

"At Mrs. O'Donovan's, and at Mr. Ferrall's, and with the fisher-people down at Dukella."

"You are at home everywhere. And who is Mrs. O'Donovan, to begin with?"

"She is my mother," said Heber, standing forward.

"A great distinction!—the farmer woman over at Kilcronan. I have seen you before," said Lord Gytrash, putting up his eyeglass, and taking note of the boy. "And you go visiting at Seagull Lodge too, Lady Honoria?"

"Mr. Ferrall invites me. He is teaching us both lessons," said Honoria.

"And what do you do at Mrs. O'Donovan's?"

"I learn a lot of other things from her; and sometimes I help her. She teaches me to knit stockings, and to play the harp.

"I suppose you go out fishing at Dukella?"

"It isn't the season; but sometimes I help to mend the nets, and sometimes I only talk to the people.

"How would you like to be sent to Galway to learn millinery?"

"I shouldn't like it. I would rather stay where I am. If the Major will not keep me I will go to Mrs. O'Donovan, and work for her."

"As a farmer's girl, Lady Honoria?"

"As any kind of a girl, because she is good and I love her."

"Good evening, Lord Gytrash," said Heber suddenly, pulling off his cap and making a mocking bow. "Come along, Lady Honoria."

They turned about on the instant, thus cutting the questions short, and Lord Gytrash whistled to his dogs and continued on his way.

"He isn't as bad as the Major," said Honoria, "but he laughs at us."

"Some day he'll be sorry for it," said Heber.

"I don't think either of them will ever be sorry for anything," said Honoria.

"Nobody gets on for ever without being sorry," said Heber. "Mother says so. When you don't begin by being sorry for anything, you have to be all the sorrier in the end."

"I don't want anyone to be sorry," said Honoria, "if they wouldn't be bad. But they oughtn't to be both bad and never sorry."

"Mother says it is better to be good even if you have to suffer; and she ought to know, for she has had a lot of trouble," said Heber.

Meanwhile Lord Gytrash went back to the Castle, and reported the conversation to the Major, greatly to his own amusement.

"I don't see the fun," said the Major. "A nice thing to have this minx trapesing about the country, and making acquaintances everywhere!"

"What would you have her to do?" asked his lordship.

"Do? Nothing. How can I tell what such a monkey ought to do? I don't know anything about children, least of all girls. Can't she stay in the store-room, and help Mrs. Brennan to keep accounts?"

"Perhaps when Ferrall has finished her education she may do so."

"Ferrall? What has he got to do with it?"

"She goes to school to Ferrall every morning, along with that boy of Mrs. O'Donovan's," said Lord Gytrash. "A very fine boy too, and as bold as brass. The Lady Honoria is not likely to grow much meeker by living in his company."

"Very interfering of Ferrall; extremely impertinent. He is coming to dine here to-morrow evening, and I will have it out with him."

"Capital!" said Lord Gytrash in high glee. "I warrant you will give him a piece of your mind! But Ferrall will be able for you."

"Of course, you will always take part with anyone who opposes me," said the Major peevishly.

"Not at all," said his friend. "I shall only be pleased to see you conquer a worthy foe"

One of the few dissipations of Mr. Ferrall's retired life was to dine with Major Turbary. Dwellers in places so remote as this lonely seaboard of Connaught will naturally draw together, thankful for any kind of human intercourse, glad to meet those who, under other circumstances, would scarcely have been accounted congenial companions. The three men who so often met at the dinner-table at Glyn Castle were as unlike in their views and tastes as three individuals could be, yet through stress of necessity they had grown to understand each other's peculiarities, and really to enjoy each other's society.

On the next evening, when his neighbour came to dine, the Major did not wait till the soup was disposed of before he opened his attack.

"So, Mr. Ferrall, I hear you have been poaching on my preserves."

"What are your preserves, Major? I'm not a sportsman. I don't interfere with your snipe or your plovers."

"No. Only with a person, a girl, who is at present under my wing——"

"I think the little girl is a good deal on her own wing," said Ferrall, smiling. "And her wandering little wing carried her to me. What objection have you got to make to it?"

"I object that you ought not to encourage a girl to wander. She ought to be in the housekeeper's room, helping Mrs. Brennan to keep accounts."

"How do you expect her to be able to keep accounts? You are giving her no education."

"She has been to the National School, where they teach arithmetic; and Mrs. Brennan is capable of teaching her anything else she needs to know. What kind

of education do you think I am bound to give to a minx who has dropped herself down on my good-nature from Heaven knows where?" stuttered the Major.

"The Lady Honoria Turbary!" said Lord Gytrash, with a quizzical glance at Ferrall.

"So she calls herself, but so I do not call her. If Finbarr himself were here, what could I do for him except say: 'How do you do, Finbarr?' offer him some shooting, and then show him the door? I'm a poor man myself, but he is a poorer one, if he's alive. Other men have got his property because those who went before him were fools, and squandered instead of making the most of what was theirs when they had it. And now I, who am an old bachelor, and could never afford to marry, am asked to make an adopted daughter of a young madam who sets up to be the last of an unlucky race, with a right to pull me down, and make trouble for my old age."

"It's a hard case," said Lord Gytrash. "I'm beginning to feel uneasy myself; because, you know, I am also a cousin, only one remove farther from the minx than you are. Ferrall is the only safe man among the three of us, and I suppose that is the reason why he is not afraid that the Lady Honoria will live to be his ruin. What are you teaching her, Ferrall? Is she learning to keep Mrs. Brennan's accounts?"

"She will be equal to keeping accounts for a good many of us by and by," said Ferrall. "A clearer little brain I have not met with; and unless the Major puts me in the pound for it I intend to continue to have the pleasure of instructing her."

"So you intend to defy me," spluttered the Major. "Confound you, sir, if Connaught were not the barren

spot it is for society I would cut you off at once with a bad dinner——"

"Not at once, Major. This is too good a dinner to be cut off with. You must wait till his lordship is gone, and there are no more plovers——"

"And the Major is left to count his glasses of punch in solitude," said Lord Gytrash.

"Mourning that he is not my lordlord, and can't evict me," said Ferrall, laughing.

"If I evicted him I'd have to invite him here to live with me," growled the Major, "for I can't do without him. But I warn you, Ferrall, to let that monkey alone, or she may yet live to be a millstone round your neck."

"Oh, Ferrall is fond of going to meet such dangers!" said Lord Gytrash. "The Lady Honoria is not his only pupil. He has got the son of that farmer woman, Mrs. O'Donovan, coming to him for lessons too."

"A brilliant boy," said Mr. Ferrall.

"What? What? Another genius! A school for ragamuffins next! Truly they say that Connaught is the refuge of the destitute, and the home of oddities unendurable by the rest of the world!"

"Take your choice, Major," said Ferrall, laughing. "I rank myself with the oddities at once."

"I see, sir, that you mean to assort me into a bag with the destitute——"

"Not quite, Major, since you are able to give me this excellent dinner, despite my eccentricities."

"Come, Ferrall," said Lord Gytrash, "you must not praise the dinners until I have departed with my gun."

"Mrs. Brennan's poultry are fine," said Ferrall. "Her

savoury goose is an appetizing dish, and her chickens are as plump as stall-fed pigeons. Now, my chickens are as lean as the peasantry of the country."

"Humph!" said the Major. "It is their stiff-necked temper that makes them lean."

"Their necks are not stiff until after they are wrung," said Ferrall.

The Major stared. "I mean the peasantry," he said.

"And I meant the chickens," said Ferrall.

"By the way, about that brilliant boy, as you call him. Who is his mother, that he seems so proud of her?"

"Mrs. O'Donovan is a lady by birth," said Ferrall.

"More ladies!" sneered the Major. "It's a dangerous example to Mrs. Brennan, who will be turning out a duchess on my hands, to be even with the fashion."

"A Lady Honoria to keep her accounts would certainly be stimulating," said Lord Gytrash.

"Well, sir, Mrs. O'Donovan is a lady by birth and education," said Ferrall. "The story of her marriage with a farmer is well known in the county of Waterford."

"Why didn't she stay there then?" snapped the Major. "She has the best farm on my property, and far too cheap. If what you say is true, she has money, and ought to pay me more."

"I don't think she has money, except by her industry," said Ferrall.

"I shall see to that," said the Major.

"I am sorry I mentioned her," said Ferrall. "The Major's attentions to ladies are not gallant attentions, and need not be provoked."

"Ladies!" shouted the Major. "Where have we got ladies?"

"Where have we got gentlemen?" said Ferrall, with a stern eye on his host's angry countenance.

The evening was on the wane, and Ferrall now prepared to go. The Major also rose in his chair, purple with excitement.

"Put him out, Gytrash; put him out!" he shouted, and Ferrall and Lord Gytrash left the room, laughing.

In the hall Kerrigan was waiting to put on the visitor's coat.

"God bless you, sir, for your kindness to the poor orphans!" he whispered.

"Who are the orphans, Kerrigan?"

"The little girl, sir. With her talk about her father, and never a father she has in the world! Sure, the white bears has eaten him long ago? And sorra father has the boy itself, only his mother."

"A good mother is sometimes worth two fathers," said Ferrall.

"I've no children myself, sir," said Kerrigan, "no more than your honour, nor the Major, nor his lordship. But all the same, I have the heart within me for young cratures, an' thim startin' to get through a quare world that myself will soon be leavin'."

CHAPTER IX

"He's too Dreadful"

LORD GYTRASH departed for England. It was his custom to have a Christmas house-party at Tam Towers, his place in Yorkshire, Major Turbary being always one of the time-honoured guests; but on this occasion the Major was attacked by a sudden fit of the gout, and was unable to accompany him.

"You'll follow me, of course, Turbary, in a day or two. My doctor is a capital man for the gout, and he'll put you to rights. Meanwhile I'll have your room aired, and the warming-pan put in your bed."

The gout said no, however. A foot tied up in wadding was not to be trifled with; and Kerrigan had a bad time while the snow fell, and the Major complained that he was a prisoner at Glyn for the winter, and that his friend had deserted him.

"And there's that prig Ferrall pretending to have a cold that prevents him coming to dine with me, although I forgave him for insulting me the last evening he was here."

"I heard you abusin' him, your honour, Major."

"Did I abuse him? Well, that's some comfort, as I have had to forgive him since. I can't live without some kind of company, Kerrigan."

"Sure you can't, sir, and myself does the best I can

for you. Would you be likin' one of my own old stories, if I'd be tellin' it to you?"

"Confound your old stories. I know them all by heart. I'm a lonely old man, Kerrigan, and the people round me here don't care a rap about me. When I was in the army the men were fond of me——"

"Well, y' see, Major, thim were soldiers, and these are the tinants. The soldiers had their pay, and they wanted nothin' but a good word from you. The tinants would like y' too if you were a little bit aisier on them."

"It's too easy I am on them, you rascal. You talk to me like this now, when I am tied to my chair, and can't reach to anything that I could throw at you."

"Which thing would you like now, your honour? Sure I'll hand it over to you. Would it be the poker, or the clothes-brush—that's a thing you're very fond of; or maybe it would be the bootjack——?"

"Get out of my sight, you rascal!" shouted the Major furiously; and Kerrigan grinned and vanished.

The snow went on falling, and frost followed, making the cliff paths and bog tracks impassable. Even the doctor found a difficulty in making his way along the inland road to the nearest town.

"Keep the old man amused," he said to Kerrigan; "it's bad for him to be lonely."

"Sure, he needn't be so lonely," said Kerrigan, "if he didn't want to be fightin' battles with every mortal crature that comes next or nigh him."

"He's an old soldier, you know," said the doctor, while Kerrigan tucked the rug round his knees in the trap, "and it's his nature to fight."

"It's long enough since he was soldierin'," said Kerrigan, "for that he might have forgot the way of it, an'

not to be makin' battlefields where himself can fire at everybody, and nobody dares to be at war with him."

"All the same, I'm sorry for him," said Kerrigan to Mrs. Brennan, "sittin' there lonesome. It's many's the day since he had to pass the winter by himself at Glyn. Is Mr. Ferrall that bad that he can't come over and sit with him a bit?"

"He is bad himself, the doctor says; and the roads is bad," said Mrs. Brennan.

"Mr. Ferrall's a good sight a younger man than the Major."

"So itself. The youngest has to be careful in such times. And why would he come to have the head blown off of him with abuse, every word he would say?" said Mrs. Brennan.

"Ah, who would be mindin' the Major?" said Kerrigan. "Mr. Ferrall nothin' but laughs at him."

Honoria was sitting at the table with Mrs. Brennan, deep in a book which Mr. Ferrall had lent her on the last day of lessons before the snow had enforced holidays. It was a narrative of travel which had carried her far from Glyn, and was helping her to get through the days which cut her off alike from Seagull Lodge and from the O'Donovan's. She paid no attention to what was being said about the Major. He had become only a name to her—the name of one in whose house she lived on sufferance, but who did not want to see her, or to know anything about her. She had not been listening to the words flying about her ears, but the repetition of "lonely" and "lonesome" caught her attention.

"I wouldn't like to be sitting up there by myself," she said, looking up from her book, "and the storm

screeching, and the hail rattling on the window. I'm glad I'm not Major Turbary."

"Well, dear, you'll be old some day yourself, and maybe you'll be lonely," said Kerrigan.

"I hope I'll never be old," said Honoria, and applied herself again to her book.

"Y' mustn't say that, little lady," said Kerrigan. "It's in nature that everybody's young once, and old afther. And you're not allowed to be escapin' it."

Honoria put her hands up to her face and fingered her features all over.

"I don't think those wrinkles could ever get into my cheeks," she said contentedly.

"Oh, faix an' they will, an' maybe the gout will get into your toes too, an' nothin' but kindness to come between you and misery. An' it's while you're young you ought to be thinkin' of the old, as thim that is only on before y' a bit on the hard road o' this world we have all got to travel, Lady Honoria."

"He isn't kind himself," said Honoria.

"You're under his roof, an' you're eatin' his bread," said Kerrigan.

"My father will pay him for it when he comes back."

Kerrigan refrained from saying: "Your father will never come back", and bustled away to get a poultice ready.

The next evening the Major was somewhat better, and more than ever eager for a little companionship. Kerrigan had exhausted all his arts of entertainment, when a brilliant idea occurred to him. It was not a spontaneous flash of genius, but sprang from his master's restless curiosity as to every movement of life going on within the Castle.

"How do you kill the time down there, Kerrigan? It seems to me that the whole place is as silent as the dead these confounded black evenings."

"Oh, faith then, sir, it isn't a bit silent we are! It's the pity of the world you couldn't hear the laughs, and the chattin', and the talkin' that does be goin' on. Sure that young one is enough herself to keep a nation alive. Nothin' like a child, let alone a girl, for heartsomeness and fun at the fireside of a winter's evenin'."

"What young one are you talking about, Kerrigan?"

Kerrigan coughed discreetly.

"Sure, sir, I oughtn't to be namin' her to you, an' you havin' such a notion against her. Ah, then! it's ourselves that has the benefit by that same notion, for if your honour did be wantin' her to sit with you we'd have to do without our fun."

"Then hold your tongue about her for the future!" growled the Major. "And I wish you all joy of your entertainment."

"That wasn't much of a hit," said Kerrigan to himself as he left the room, "and I'm not as sorry for him as I was last night, the ould naygar! Howsomdever, maybe it'll rankle in him."

And so it did. The thought of the hilarity in the housekeeper's room haunted the old gentleman. The snow still debarred him from the visits of friends, and a restriction on tumblers of punch was included in the doctor's treatment of his gout. He read all the newspapers brought him by the one postal delivery of the day, even to the advertisements of servants out of place, and the rewards offered for lost dogs, and the notices of jewellery found.

"It's a pretty pass to be reduced to!" he grumbled.

"I suppose I'll have to try to read a book next. I wonder if Ferrall would lend me one of Lever's novels. If he hasn't them, what's the use of all those bookcases?"

And then again his mind went back to the pleasant life downstairs, in the housekeeper's premises.

"You may leave the door open, Kerrigan," he said; "and the doors downstairs, do y' hear, sir?"

"I do hear. But sure your honour will get cold with the draughts."

"That's not your business, sir."

"I don't know who's else business it is, when I have to be nursin' you, Major. But if it's the laughin' y' want to hear, you're welcome to it."

"Anything that'll cut across that screech of the wind is better than nothing," said the Major. "And—come back here, Kerrigan, and fix this bandage better. And by the by, what is that young one you were talking about doing downstairs at the present moment, Kerrigan?"

"Playin' beggar-my-neighbour with Mrs. Brennan, she is, Major. An' it's her can play it beautiful, and take the fun out of it."

"Why, I played that myself when I was a small boy, Kerrigan. Tell her to come up here with the cards, and have a game with me."

"D'ye mane it, yer honour?"

"Of course I mean it. What's the good of giving houseroom to her if I can't get even as much use of her as you and the rest of you are getting?"

"Well, sir, I'll tell her, and I'll see will she come."

"Will she come indeed! Tell her I sent my commands, d'ye hear, Kerrigan?"

"Oh, I hear! But what I want to make bold to insinse y' into you is that if the Lady Honoria has the Turbary

face she has the Turbary temper along with it, your honour, Major."

Then Kerrigan was gone, without waiting to see the effect of his parting shot, fearful of doing mischief by depriving the girl of an opportunity of approaching nearer to her crusty kinsman.

"It's the sky that'll be fallin' next, not the snow at all, but the sky itself," he said, when he had reached the housekeeper's room, and stood in the middle of the floor, looking dazed with astonishment.

"Did you see a ghost, man?" asked Mrs. Brennan.

"I did not," he said, "though this old castle might be full o' them for that matter; an' it was only the wind, and not the banshee, I heard comin' down the stairs. But it's a quarer thing than all that, Mrs. Brennan, that has put me out of breath. It's the Major that wants the pleasure of the Lady Honoria Turbary, upstairs, to be playin' cards with him."

"It isn't a good joke for you, Kerrigan," said Mrs. Brennan. "I've heard y' at better."

"Oh, sorra joke!" said Kerrigan. "An' he manes it. Will you be goin' upstairs to play beggar-my-neighbour with your cousin the Major, Lady Honoria Turbary?"

"I won't," said Honoria.

"Oh, but you will! I'm not goin' to put his commands on you—but if you saw the poor old crature sittin' there widout a soul to speak to, barrin' myself, that he's sick and tired of lookin' at——"

Honoria stood up, first defiant, and then terrified.

"I can't go. He doesn't want me. And he's too dreadful."

"But he does want you. And he isn't too terrible

"'THE LADY HONORIA TURBARY', SAID KERRIGAN"

now; the poultices has taken it out of him. Sickness does a lot to meeken people. Come, your ladyship, take the cards and folly me up to the Major."

Honoria trembled and clasped her hands. The two old servants exchanged glances over her head which she did not see.

"I wish I had been down at Mrs. O'Donovan's when the snow came," said Honoria; "I'd have been there now. I never thought he would want to see me. Did you, Mr. Kerrigan?"

"Well, I didn't; but as it has happened, we'll take it for luck."

"Sure I thought you were always pitiful to them that is sick an' sorry, let alone old and lonesome," said Mrs. Brennan.

"If he's turned into that," said Honoria, "it's different. Give me the cards, Mr. Kerrigan."

"Sure there's a fresh pack here—the same he was playin' with two or three weeks ago with his lordship."

Then Honoria walked straight to the door and followed Kerrigan up the ghostly staircase.

"The Lady Honoria Turbary," said Kerrigan, ushering her into his master's presence; and she stood inside the doorway with the cards in her hand.

CHAPTER X

"The Major'll Die Fightin'"

To Honoria's young eyes the large, high room looked dismal. It was the only chamber in the Castle where the windows were comfortably draped, and the curtains drawn across one end of the room were of gauntly length and sombre colour. The old man sat near a good fire, with one foot, tied up in cotton wool, extended on a chair, and a table with necessaries for an invalid by his side.

"Well, madam!" he said, "what are you going to do for me?"

"Kerrigan says I can amuse you, sir."

"I see you have brought the cards."

"You know how to play beggar-my-neighbour, sir?"

"Yes, madam, or I shouldn't have sent for you. And I warn you I am going to beggar you."

"You have had more practice than I have. You've been at it many years, sir."

The Major glared at the young eyes bent on him piercingly, as Honoria stood waiting for further orders.

"What—what do you mean, madam?"

"You've been beggaring your neighbour all your life, sir. Kerrigan says so."

"You rascal!" cried the Major.

'Why, now, Major, didn't you tell me that you played

the game when you were small, and as you don't dis-remember it——"

"I see. Well, don't be putting double meanings into anybody's mouth about your master, Kerrigan."

"Double, is it? Sure every single word I say about your honour is true, and does you credit, if y' wouldn't go beyond it. And would you like anything left handy, Major? The poker, or the clothes-brush, or——"

"Hold your impertinent tongue, sir, and begone out of this."

"Sure I have to settle the fire, sir. Sure the bell's broke, if y' wanted turf. And I'll be comin' up again with a couple more candles."

Kerrigan plucked Honoria's skirt as he spoke, to reassure her with the knowledge that he would not be far away, in case she felt frightened.

"Sit down, madam," said the Major, "and I'll see how soon I can dispatch you. Shuffle the cards, and let us get to business."

He grimaced with pain and shifted his foot as he spoke, and Honoria lost all fear. He was only a cross old man with a bad foot, and he wanted her to amuse him. She forgot that she was the Lady Honoria, and that he was Major Turbary, who had refused to recognize her. She would rather he had been a nice old man, like Lacey the fisherman; but seeing that men are not made all the same, she accepted this one even as he fell to her lot.

She won game after game.

"You give yourself all the cards," he said.

"I don't, sir. You can deal them yourself."

"I see they all run to you," he grumbled. "You're

lucky. But luck in cards is no luck in anything else, madam."

"There's no such thing as luck," said Honoria. "It's what we do."

"Explain yourself, madam," said the Major, throwing the cards across the table to her.

"I'm not a madam," said Honoria.

"What are you then?"

"I'm only a girl. But I wish I were a boy; I'd soon be out of your way if I were a boy."

"Humph! Would you, indeed? What do you think you would do with yourself?"

"I'd be a sailor or a soldier."

"A soldier is the better," said the Major complacently. "I am a soldier."

"Were you ever in a battle, sir?"

"I was in a battle, madam."

"What was it like to be in a battle, Major Turbary?"

"Like?—like! It was like this," said the Major, putting his finger on a scar on his cheek. "This is the mark of a wound that went near killing me, but didn't, or I shouldn't be here playing cards."

"Oh, I didn't know!" said Honoria, looking with awe at the ugly scar, which had seemed to her a sort of expression of the general natural ill-humour of the Major, a sign manual of the wicked spirit that belonged to him.

"Then you are a brave man, Major Turbary."

"You didn't know that either, I suppose," said the Major grimly.

"No, sir."

"Go on, madam. I'm proof against flattery."

"I didn't mean to flatter you, sir," said Honoria, beginning to get confused by the new ideas that rushed on her. Cruelty and courage did not seem to her to run together, yet at the present moment it was courage that appealed to her.

"Will you tell me about the battle?" she said. "Where was it fought? Did you ever fight Napoleon Bonaparte?"

"No, madam. How old do you think I am? I am not a hundred. What do you know about Bonaparte?"

"I've been reading about him."

"I hope you admire him."

"Mr. Ferrall says he was a great general; but I hate him."

"He was one of the greatest generals the world ever saw. If Waterloo had not been too soon for me, I'd have been at him with Wellington at Waterloo."

"Then you hate him too?"

"He was a splendid enemy, and we beat him. Why do you hate him?"

The Major had dropped the offensive "madam", and sat up full of interest, forgetting his gout and his ill-humour.

"I hate him because he was cruel. He took his soldiers through the snow to Moscow, and they died of the cold. Brave people ought not to be cruel."

"The soldiers did not care. They would have died in a battle. Soldiers can die anywhere."

"Tell me about a battle, Major Turbary."

"A battle? Aye; let me see. It was Inkermann."

Then the Major spoke up and began to fight his battles over again. No more gout, no more age, no more impertinent minxes; nothing but cannon balls and

smoke and fire, the prod of bayonets, and the word of command; the rush of fury, and the shout of triumph. When he paused, out of breath, Honoria was standing up facing him, clapping her hands.

"Oh, I wish I had been there! I wish I had been there!" she cried.

"Do you, indeed? Well, perhaps you would have made a good soldier. I shouldn't wonder. But you're a girl, and it can't be helped. And I'm an old bachelor, and I don't know anything about girls. Here, Kerrigan, take her away, take her away! I'm as tired as if I had been in the wars. Cards are all rubbish; and I want to get to bed."

After that the Major sent every evening for the Lady Honoria to play beggar-my-neighbour with him. The snow continued to fall at intervals, and the wind was keen; and though gout had done its worst on this occasion, and the patient was convalescent, yet he was still a prisoner, and weary of himself and his surroundings. In desiring the company of the girl, cards were no longer his object; but they supplied an excuse for obtaining an audience fresh and ardent, one who had not learned to receive his stories with smiles of indulgence or derision, but heard them with the enthusiastic sympathy they deserved and demanded.

Honoria, on her side, had got a great surprise and a new excitement. There was still a disturbing element about her visit to that high room in the evenings, when the wind howled and the breakers roared, and she was tired of long hours with her book and the gossip of the servants; just sufficient of fear and wonder to make a thrilling adventure of the climb to the old soldier's den, not knowing all that might come of it. The visit was

the great event of her day, and to hear about real wars was better than reading about them in history. It made stirring life within the Castle walls. Nobody from outside came through the snow to the doors for another fortnight.

"Everybody's sick," said Kerrigan. "There's a perfect surfeit of colds in the neighbourhood."

"Surfeit is not the word, Kerrigan," said Honoria.

"It's the Major's word, an' it's good enough for me. 'I've had a surfeit of oysters,' he says to me a while ago, an' whatever he is he has elegant language. I hope Mr. Ferrall isn't tryin' to teach you entirely too much knowledge, your ladyship."

"Well, I hope somebody will come to amuse the Major before he gets a surfeit of me," said Honoria.

"Sure he's shoutin' for y' this minute," said Kerrigan. "'Send her up to me,' says he, 'for she has courage and she has good understandin',' says he. 'It's a terrible pity she isn't a boy,' says he, 'for then I could have got her made a soldier of,' says he. 'But there she is,' says he, 'a girl,' says he, 'an' what but we must be makin' the best of her?' says he."

Thus encouraged, Honoria lost the little fear that remained to her, and presented herself evening after evening to her redoubtable kinsman with a cheerful front. And night after night the Major fought his battles over again for her admiration. She was so absorbed in skirmishes and manœuvres, defeats and victories, long marches and nights in the trenches, surprise attacks, and martial music, that she forgot to ask the old soldier why he had left his calling to engage in ignoble warfare with the poor, ranking himself with their enemies, cold and hunger, the rack-rent, and the

potato blight. Every evening she intended to ask him such questions, and it was not for lack of courage in her that they remained unasked. The fiery youth conjured up before her by the old man's vivid recollections was so present to her that the sins of his late years disappeared behind the glamour.

She followed him all the way along a difficult march, wanted to learn the names of the soldiers who were bravest in the fight, what became of those who were wounded, and how the heroes were rewarded; and she must know the effect on the world of every battle that was lost on one side, every victory gained on the other.

"It's impossible to tell the consequences of all the things that happen," said the Major.

"War's done for good, isn't it?" said Honoria, "to make people glad to live in peace? If not, it would be wicked that a cruel thing should be so glorious."

"I don't know about that," said the Major. "You must ask your schoolmaster Ferrall for the whys and the wherefores. The fighting is enough for me."

"You loved the fighting without caring what the fight was about?"

"I loved the fighting," said the Major.

"If your foot was well would you like to be in another war?"

"To be sure I would," said the Major.

"Kerrigan," said Honoria the next morning, "I know now why the Major is so hard on the people, and was so cross to me. It is because he loves fighting."

"Didn't I many's the time try to insinse you into that same?" said Kerrigan.

"It's a pity he couldn't be got away into some great war," said Honoria.

"He's too ould for that," said Kerrigan. "The years and the gout has got him prisoner in the battle. But it's a poor lookout for the people here that he puts again' his guns. For the Major'll die fightin'."

CHAPTER XI

Mrs. Emmeline Turbary

ABOUT seven years after the date of the occurrences related in the last chapter a letter was written from Tam Towers in Yorkshire to a lady in India.

"DEAREST CARRIE,—

"This letter is overdue; but I have been travelling about so much that my correspondence has necessarily suffered. I wanted my son to see something of Europe before placing him at a college in preparation for Sandhurst, and there was no time to lose. You know all my ambition for him, and poor as I am, and without influence, yet that ambition grows none the less for Rolf's increasing years and inches.

"Well, here I am at Tam Towers, the seat of Lord Gytrash, a cousin of my late husband, a man whom I jilted long ago when he was only Jim Pemberton, a penniless person whom no one would ever have expected to succeed to a title and a millionaire's property. My poor husband was a better match then, and I had to think of my prospects. But there!—marriage is so often a failure, and the most long-sighted woman cannot see round all the corners of life.

"I told you of these matters when we exchanged confidences, and as I have kept your secrets I know you will keep mine. I have followed your advice, and

held to my resolution of looking up old connections; and my first step in that direction has been eminently satisfactory.

"On arriving in London I wrote to Lord Gytrash from my hotel, asking his advice about a matter of business; and I was not disappointed. He invited me here to join a Christmas house party, and I need not say how pleased I was to come.

"He is still a bachelor, and much nicer as an elderly man than he was when younger, even putting aside the advantages of wealth. Some people call him brusque in manner, and I confess he has an odd way, at times, of turning things; but undoubtedly he is kind and hospitable, and delightfully generous.

"We have quite a splendid house party—a duchess, a peeress, and several honourables, besides other notabilities. It is well I bethought me of getting some pretty frocks and things in Paris. The ladies of this party are no great beauties, and your poor friend does not look too badly among them. I am not an old woman yet. Indeed, there are no old women now; which is a great boon when one has a taste for making a nice appearance. Wigs are as plentiful as blackberries, and it is folly to fret over whitening hair. I find that a rich chestnut suits me better than the ideal locks of the beautiful woman, though it is a pity, as white hair takes such a sweet gold. But then there is danger of brassiness, and golden hair requires so much living up to in the matter of choice cosmetics, and the delicate colours in dress that are so expensive. But you do not need to have these foregone conclusions pointed out to you, dear Carrie!

"I am very nicely placed here. His lordship intro-

duces me as his cousin, though, of course, the cousinship is only through my husband. It is as well that I have left Rolf at a school for the present, till I see my way about in his interests. He would be rather out of place here just now, and I feel more free without him.

"By the way, do you remember another of my old suitors whom I treated badly? (Ah, I was a sad flirt!) Lord Gytrash is always lamenting the absence from this party of his dear friend, Major Turbary, who, it seems, spends Christmas with him, except when attacked by the gout, which appears to be the case pretty often. The Major was another cousin. He was an older man than Jim Pemberton when I jilted him, and had won honours in the Crimea. But I think I liked Jim the better of the two. The Major is now also an old bachelor — perhaps through my fault — and he has dropped into the unenviable position of a petty landlord on the seaboard of Connaught. Gytrash hints that I owe him a visit too, and that he might be useful to Rolf. I would rather depend on Gytrash himself; but one must play one's cards carefully. So perhaps I shall go to Connaught after all. My next bulletin will give you further news on this and other matters. Meanwhile I am your devoted friend,

"EMMELINE TURBARY."

Mrs. Turbary was writing this letter in her bedroom, a luxurious apartment looking out on well-kept gardens from which the snow was swept as it fell. Lord Gytrash was accustomed to lady visitors, and knew how to cater for their comfort. The richly-coloured carpet, the rose-garlands on the bright chintz window-

curtains, gave warmth to an interior which contrasted pleasantly with the chill greys of the outer wintry world. The blaze of the wood fire sparkled on polished brasses, and was reflected in the many mirrors which make a room a paradise for a vain woman, who likes to see how she looks in her every attitude and movement, and never wearies of her own company.

To Mrs. Emmeline Turbary, who had of late years been a good deal accustomed to makeshifts and happy-go-lucky contrivances, her present surroundings were as new as they were charming. When had she emptied her old, battered travelling trunks into such a splendid Noah's Ark of a wardrobe? And all these lavender-scented drawers, how they gaped for such quantities of exquisite lingerie as she had not wherewith to fill them, yet which a lady of her position ought to possess! Alas for the folly of her youth, which had robbed her of such delights and splendours!

When she had finished her correspondence the lady made a careful toilet, attiring herself in a costume of fine purple cloth, with a large hat of the same rich colour, and a dainty vest of some delicate white fabric threaded with gold. When all was done she was satisfied by the assurance of her mirror that here was a handsome, stylish woman whom no kinsman of her husband need hesitate to present to his friends.

The guests had one and all gone to skate on a lake in the grounds, but Mrs. Turbary, in quest of her host, happened on him in a shrubbery.

"No, I don't skate. A little too heavy for that kind of exercise," he said. "But you? You are just the figure for it: neither light enough to be blown away, nor the weight to go down."

"Alas! I have had no time for such frivolities. Life is too serious. I fret about the future of my son."

"Not a bit of it; he's sure to light on his feet. You are putting him into the army. There will be a big war by the time he is ready for the guns, and it will be kill or cure with him."

Mrs. Turbary uttered a little cry of dismay.

"Oh, Lord Gytrash, you are not a mother!"

"No, Mrs. Turbary, nor a father, I am happy to say. I am told that children are inestimable boons, but as Fate has denied me such luxuries she has given me compensation in the inexpressible joy I feel at being without them."

Emmeline sighed and looked pensive. She was saying to herself that these were the expressions of a disappointed man, and that she was the cause of the disappointment.

"It is a pity," she said. "What a father you would have been! What a guide to a young man! A mother can do so little, and I have no one to advise me."

Lord Gytrash laughed. "It seems to me that in all probability my duties as a father would have been chiefly to supply money to a spendthrift son. I see a good deal of that among my friends. And as for advice, our cousin, Turbary, knows more about the military than I do. When you visit him, as I expect you will, he can put you on the right rails—an excellent pointsman. You may remember——"

"Ah," said Emmeline, "perhaps I remember too much! Memories are so sad. One's mistakes rise up and punish one so mercilessly——"

"My dear madam, I don't think you can have much of that kind to reproach yourself with. I believe you

always saw your way about as well as any person could do. As for memories being sad, I suppose a pretty woman sometimes regrets that the years bringing her grown-up children and the honours of maturity will not leave her also the peculiar attractions of her youth; but if she is honourable and wise she will respect the conditions of the exchange, and give a cheerful receipt for what she has got by her early bargain."

"Dear cousin, you talk so cleverly it is difficult sometimes to understand you. I have a very simple mind, and it is easy to bewilder me."

"Am I clever? As a rule I am rather stupid; but sometimes I make a hit at guessing conundrums. Not the big enigmas of life, you know—these are beyond me—but just the little, easy riddles that one's friends make up for one's amusement."

Here the skaters were seen returning, and the bountiful lunch that followed helped Mrs. Turbary to forget her uneasiness at his lordship's innuendoes. She had just time to remind herself that people called him brusque and blunt, and that if he were not a lord and a millionaire they would probably describe him as rude. But had she not given him cause for pique? Such reflections, when indulged in later, brought her a delightful accession of self-complacency; and, so encouraged, she devoted her energies to making acquaintance with her neighbours of the house party.

A small, starved-looking man in spectacles, an author of books, described in a whisper by another guest as cynical, gave her a good deal of information, which he warranted to be genuine, about their host and the people he gathered round him.

"He delights in peculiar people; an individual with

an outrageous fad attracts him. He is a bit odd himself, and it is a case of like seeking like. There is the Dowager-Duchess of Doldrums, apparently a harmless old lady. Her craze is an enthusiasm for transferring an English country village to Egypt wholesale and planting it in the desert, to show the natives by example how life ought to be conducted. There is a village on her own estate which would suit exactly; but the people don't see it, and even the parson objects. Lord Gytrash gives her the sympathy which so many deny her."

"How naughty!" said Mrs. Turbary.

"Then there is Lady Longbow, who is an accomplished astrologer, and will draw your horoscope for you any day you please. Lord Gytrash, she tells me, never takes any step without consulting her. That young man with the hair is a poet who has become demented because the world refuses to recognize his genius; and the youth yonder with the ghostly eyes is a psychic researcher."

"How do you and I come to be here?" said Mrs. Emmeline.

"To understand my special madness you must read my books," was the reply. "As for you——"

"Mrs. Turbary's special oddity is that she was always a person of discrimination," said Lord Gytrash, drawing near. "Could you believe that she once jilted me?"

"Oh, cousin!" simpered Emmeline.

"Am I not a forgiving man, Sourby?"

"I had been asking myself what Mrs. Turbary's extraordinary peculiarity could be," said Sourby gallantly.

"And I am afraid she is impenitent," said his lordship. "Put it into one of your books, Sourby, original story and sequel;" and he moved away again.

"Lord Gytrash is certainly as odd as any of his guests," said Mrs. Turbary, unable to make up her mind at the moment as to his lordship's meaning. Was his startling suggestion to be taken as friendly or unfriendly to her? And what did his allusion to a sequel signify?

"He is surprisingly outspoken," said Sourby. "But you must not imagine I believe him in this instance, Mrs. Turbary. No lady of discrimination could act as he accused you (in jest, of course) of acting."

"But, alas, it is true!" said Mrs. Emmeline. "What folly will not a young, giddy girl be guilty of, Mr. Sourby?"

"I could not imagine you ever giddy, madam. But your cruelty has evidently not harmed the best and truest heart in this world of falsehood."

Mrs. Turbary drew herself up and looked tragic.

"He ought not to have alluded to so delicate a matter," she said; and then, the psychic young man looming near with a question for the author in his haunted eyes, she withdrew, and retired to her own room to examine her impressions of what had occurred, and to consider how much of the late conversation she could, with prudence, introduce into her next communication to her friend in India.

A prettily cooked report of Cousin Jim's odd conduct was sent to Carrie by the next mail, and some time later was followed by another dispatch on matters even more important.

"I have been a little disturbed," wrote Mrs. Turbary, "by a piece of news dropped on me by his lordship in his usual careless, half-jeering manner, which so often leaves one uncertain of his meaning, and of whether he

is in earnest or not. You know all my little plans and expectations, how I hoped the wealthy and solitary Gytrash would take us up, first for kinship's sake, and afterwards on our own merits. I told you, I believe, that in case of the death of another person my son would succeed to a title, and from all I have been able to learn I consider it certain that the Earl of Finbarr is no more.

"Well, I took an opportunity yesterday to allude to this matter in the course of a conversation, and my cousin's way of receiving my observations was not exactly encouraging.

"'Have you assurance,' he said, 'that the Earl of Finbarr is dead?'

"'Only circumstantial evidence,' I admitted.

"'No evidence at all,' he said, which of course is ridiculous, seeing that he went to the Arctic regions, and has not been heard of for many a year.

"'How do you know, madam,' he asked (he has an odd, old-fashioned way of addressing one as madam), 'that he is not living among the Eskimos, married to a charming squaw, whom he will bring home some day, dressed in white-bear fur that will set all the feminine world wild with envy? He may also bring a well-grown young Eskimo back with him as his heir to the title. Where will your son be then, Mrs. Turbary?'

"I am sure, dear Carrie, he only says these provoking things when he remembers how badly I treated him long ago, little knowing how much I have suffered for my fault, and how gladly I would make amends for it. But one is obliged to let him have his fling, remembering what a tender heart he is said to have behind it all. So I listened meekly as he went on.

"'Are you aware,' he said, 'that there is not a rood of land, nor a coin of the realm, attached to the title of Finbarr? And have you thought of the sorry figure cut in the world by titled destitution? The present Earl shook off the absurdity by striking out a brave career for himself, with a cry for death or glory. Is your son prepared to follow in his footsteps?'

"'Rolf is young——' I began, but he snapped me up.

"'So was Finbarr when he started to conquer the icebergs. You have shown me your son's photograph, madam, and I pronounce him a milksop.'

"It was too bad, dear Carrie. I should have liked to have given him a piece of my mind, but it would not have been politic. And I do wish poor Rolf had not put on that pease-pudding expression of his at the wrong moment. As it was, I tried to make the best of it. I put my handkerchief to my eyes and murmured that he did not know the lion's heart that beat behind that gentle exterior.

"He laughed—but he laughs at everything; and then he said abruptly:

"'Are you aware that the Earl of Finbarr was married before he went north, and left a child behind him?'

"I felt quite faint from the blow, but I rallied my courage.

"'The Earl was never married,' I said. 'You are jesting to plague me, cousin.'

"'Not a bit of it,' he said. 'The Lady Honoria Turbary is living at Glyn Castle in Connaught, under the protection of her cousin, Major Turbary.'

"He would not retract this statement, but I refuse

to believe it. Meanwhile, I must not quarrel with my bread and butter.

"'A girl is not an heir to the title,' I said.

"'True; but she may prove very interesting to her father's kinsfolk,' was his reply.

"It was a dark hint. I believe he thinks that I am hoping to see my Rolf adopted as the son of the family, and endowed with a fortune to correspond with the title. And if I am, could there be a better use for the Gytrash millions? This suggestion of a girl to be taken up as the favourite is, of course, odious to me.

"'What sort of girl is she?' I asked, assuming an air of friendly interest.

"'Oh, a fine creature,' he said, 'with the Earl's courageous eye flashing in her head! More like a boy than a girl at present, but likely to develop into a woman of an admirable type.'

"'Good-looking?' I asked.

"'Beauty is in the eye of the gazer,' he said, with one of his curious grimaces, which suggest mockery, yet do not look quite ill-natured. 'But there is a silly prejudice in favour of bright eyes and golden hair. I don't swear by it myself.'

"Here, would you believe it! he actually gave a glance at my own locks, which are at present rather a pretty shade of chestnut. Is he not a provoking and perplexing creature?

"'How old is she?' I asked.

"'Who can guess a lady's age?' he said gallantly, and this I took to be really intended as a compliment to my own appearance.

"'But she must be young,' I argued.

"'I have not reckoned up the years since the Earl

went away, nor am I sure exactly when he married,' was the answer.

"I felt that there must be something under this, for it is not likely that he is as ignorant as he would like to appear, and I asked him a few more questions. He stated that the mother died when the child was born, and that Finbarr was supposed never to have seen his daughter. And nothing more would he say on this tantalizing subject.

"'When you go to Connaught, to visit Major Turbary, you will make the acquaintance of Lady Honoria,' he said at last, with an air of cutting my curiosity down to the roots. And so he left me filled with anxiety as to what this unexpected state of things may signify.

"I must tell you, however, that I have made up my mind not to believe the story till I find it proved to be true. I suspect that it is a piece of fiction mischievously invented to tease me. But all the same I am resolved to push through every difficulty that may get in my way, and to allow nothing to interfere with my own desires and arrangements.

"At the present moment I am winding up my courage to take a step that is very distasteful to me. I must leave Tam Towers in the course of the next few days. The house party, which has been prolonged by relays of guests succeeding each other at intervals, is now coming to an end, and his lordship tells me he is starting for Monte Carlo by the end of next week. There is nothing before me now but the visit to Connaught. Gytrash says he has prepared the way for me by writing to Major Turbary, and that I am not to take it ill if the Major's invitation to me should seem rather

crustily expressed. I feel that my immediate prospect is a dreary one, but I must not shirk my duty. At all events, I shall sift this matter of the existence of a Lady Honoria, and if she be a real individual I must consider how I am to make use of her.

"My only comfort is that Cousin Jim, as I like to call him, says he will probably see me in Connaught before the winter is over."

CHAPTER XII

A Letter of Invitation

THE passing of time since Honoria had played her first game of beggar-my-neighbour with the master of Glyn, and rubbed the sharp edge off his ill humour by her admiration of the scar on his face, had made no change in the Major, he having arrived at that well-seasoned time of life when a few more years make apparently no difference. A good part of the interval had been spent out of Ireland, and the gout had not failed to pay him a fair share of attention. When well, and in the company of friends at home or abroad, he seemed oblivious of the girl's existence; but when ill and alone he never failed to send for her. Cards, backgammon, and chess were then his resources, and when tired of these he amused himself by provoking her lively remarks, and asking startling questions for the sake of her ready answers.

When she spoke too freely on certain subjects, such as his management of the tenants, she was banished to Mrs. O'Donovan's for a week.

"You must leave this place, madam, until you have learned to bridle that impertinent tongue of yours!" he would say, and Honoria heard the sentence with joy, and thoroughly delighted in her punishment. Her heart had grown to the O'Donovans, and at eighteen

and sixteen Heber and she were close friends and chums, sharing each other's interests and sympathies.

On a certain bleak day in January Honoria was undergoing one of her periods of penal servitude at the little farm.

"It will lower her pride," said the Major to Kerrigan. "So arrogant a little creature must not be encouraged in her insubordination."

"Faith, Major, it isn't little at all she's gettin', but big. Mrs. Brennan has been puttin' the len'th of your hand to her frocks."

"I don't want her to grow big," said the Major. "She is more amusing to me small."

"Time an' tide wait for no man, Major," said Kerrigan. "It's big she's growin', and a woman she'll have to be on you, whether you like it or not, Major."

The Major had just recovered from one of his attacks of gout, which had been particularly annoying to him as having prevented his spending Christmas with his friend at Tam Towers. Moreover, a fortnight had passed without bringing a letter from that friend, which was an added grievance; and Kerrigan, for his own sake as well as for the contentment of his master, was well pleased when the contents of the postbag included the big square envelope, with the splashy writing, that was familiar to him as the missive of Lord Gytrash.

"Sure, here he is at last, your honour," he said, arriving breathless in the Major's dressing-room. "Didn't I give it hot to Pat, the postboy, for the delay of it! 'It's you that has distinguished yourself this while back,' I says to him 'cuttin' across the clifts to Mr.

Ferrall, and never coming with the Major's letters to him'."

"Then you're a fool, Kerrigan. What has the post-boy to do with it? Here, help me on with my coat, and put on my slippers. It's a fine fat dispatch, and I'll read it while I'm at breakfast."

So satisfied was the Major with the event of the morning that he was in no hurry to break the seal, preferring to taste fully and leisurely the pleasure of reading its contents; and not until after he had eaten a toasted rasher and the top of his egg did he open the envelope, to see what his friend had got to say for himself.

"Dear Turbary," said the letter, "I hope the enemy is nearly routed; but if not, perhaps the news I have got to give you may help you to carry the fort. They say such nervous disorders as gout are often scared away by a shock——"

"Hang it all! What is he driving at?" muttered the Major, throwing down the letter and attacking his second rasher. "He's always joking about my gout. If he ever gets it himself, won't I punish him for it!"

"To make a long story short," continued the letter——

"What's the story?" grunted the Major. "Not a word of apology for his silence!"

The letter went on: "Who do you think is in England at present, and longing to pay you a visit? I need not ask if you remember our common friend Emmeline, the heroine of our common tragedy, the cause of our duel that never came off, and the root of our friendship!"

The Major dropped his fork. "Remember her! I should think I do, indeed. Come to see me here——?"

"You will find her a fascinating person still (a widow,

of course), and overflowing with a sentiment which you remember was one of her greatest charms. It now sets in the direction of her son, whom I am happy to say I have not seen. His photograph has been enough for me. She designs him to be a military hero, hence her enthusiastic interest in you. I have assured her she can rely on your assistance. On receiving this introduction of the lady from me, you will of course write her a hospitable note of invitation. If not, I will write it in your name, and present it to her. She is at present staying here, and appears to have enjoyed our house party. But I never wished to keep all the good things of life to myself, so I am willing to share this renewal of acquaintance with you. As I am leaving the Towers at the end of this week, I expect you to send your invitation without delay."

"The rascal!" shouted the Major, stamping his feet. "How dare he give me away in this manner? Here, Kerrigan, Kerrigan!"

Kerrigan came running.

"What's the matter, Major? Does he say he's dead, poor gentleman?"

"No, you idiot. It's not so bad as that. My only friend! It's his own handwriting. He is living and well. But a dreadful thing is going to happen, Kerrigan. A lady is coming on a visit——"

"See that now, your honour! How the ladies do be pursuin' you!"

"She's an elderly lady, Kerrigan."

"Young and ould o' them," said Kerrigan, "they're death on the military."

"She is a widow, Kerrigan."

"Worse and worse. If she'd a husband itself, he

would keep her in order a bit, but for you and me to be managin' with the likes of her——"

"There's Mrs. Brennan in the place, Kerrigan."

"So there is, Major, if she doesn't run out of it with the fright. She's a widow herself, an' she ought to know that most of them's a caution."

"Don't be disrespectful, sir. Remember you are speaking of a lady."

"Is it me disrespectful to a lady? There never was a Kerrigan born yet of that sort, your honour. We leave that to the quality—I mean the bad quality, of course. But I'm thinkin' of yourself, Major, and your best dress suit left behind you in Tam Towers, and them careless English sextons never sendin' it afther you. What right had they to be countin' on you goin' back, and it winter, an' the gout against it? And all we can do to polish up your second best, that's good enough between yourself and Mr. Ferrall, and any stray forager that might turn up out o' the storm, glad to get his dinner anyhow, if it was even out of his own topcoat, and a pair of boots to be at the fire dryin' themselves all night till mornin'!"

The disturbance in the Major's mind could not be explained to his man. That the impending visitation was bringing to his solitary bachelor's fireside the heartless heroine of the only romance of his life, once adored but long since denounced and forgotten, was an utterly unforeseen as well as an irritatingly undesirable happening. What under Heaven—the wintry heavens of Connaught—was he to do with her? What was he to say to her? Oh, that mischievous rascal Gytrash! To think that he should be the person to send him such an unwelcome visitor! Was there any way of hindering the catastrophe?

But no. That inveterate joker, who would stop at

nothing, promised to present the lady with a forged invitation from Glyn Castle, in case a genuine one did not arrive. Unless he could, in cold blood, overstep all the bounds of decency, and write: "Do not be persuaded that I wish to receive you as my guest. Under no circumstances can I tolerate such an intrusion", the plot must work out, and the lady must be allowed to come on.

And then, plunging more deeply into tragic possibilities, the Major saw in imagination the glowingly hospitable letter of invitation that Gytrash would be quite capable of writing above his name. And Emmeline, who had doubtless burned his love letters long ago, laughing at his disappointment, would never remember his handwriting so as to discover the trick.

While the Major was swallowing the cold remains of his interrupted breakfast, Kerrigan was busy creating a sensation in the servants' hall. A grand lady visitor from the four corners of the earth was coming to pay a visit at the Castle. Grandeur no word for her! Beauty and riches like the Queen of Sheba! Venus wasn't in it! No, nor Crœsus! "And I can tell you, my good people, you'll have to be up to your trigs. You'd better be lookin' up your cookery books, Mrs. Boyle. It isn't before Mr. Ferrall, nor even his lordship, that you'll be puttin' your best dinner, but servin' up to one that has been used to takin' her meals with every king and queen in Europe."

"For goodness sake come in here and talk to me private," said Mrs. Brennan, "for I can't make a grain of sense out of all you're sayin' to us."

In the retirement of the housekeeper's room Kerrigan explained himself.

"I thought it better to let the news out with an explosion," he said, "and have the talk over in time. For who knows what day or hour she may drop down on us!"

Mrs. Brennan took the matter more quietly.

"Sure, maybe she's a plain, quiet lady, and no need to make such a fright about her. A castle's a castle whatever way you look at it, and good enough, bare as it is, for most that live in houses."

"Bare it is. Now, you've said it. Not a rag of a carpet on them upper stairs, an' the Major never seein' them, an' wouldn't cover them out of his hotel bills abroad, and his clubs an' things in London that's well off enough without his money. An' nothin' in the world like a lady for pokin' round and seein' what's behind things put up to deceive her. 'Oh, vo, vo!' she says; 'is this an Irishman's castle that the world does be always boastin' about?' she says; an' away she'll go an' laugh at us to the next royalty she happens to be talkin' to."

"Wait a bit, Kerrigan. Your tongue's like the clapper of a mill. I'm thinking of where I can put the lady for a sleeping room to be comfortable."

"You haven't it. Sure the Major has the only curtains in his own apartments, and the only decent carpet on his floor."

"Maybe he would move," said Mrs. Brennan.

"I wouldn't like to be the one would ask him," said Kerrigan; "an' if he wanted to go I wouldn't let him. I'm not goin' to kill the Major with draughts, an' him just out of his gout, for any fine lady, if it was out of Kingdom Come she was, let alone India!"

"India?" said a little maid, who had stolen in for

orders from the housekeeper. "D'ye mean to say it's black she is?"

"Whish-h!" said Kerrigan, flapping his napkin at her. "White people don't be black in India unless when they don't wash their faces."

"My face is as clean as yours, Mr. Kerrigan," said the girl indignantly, and vanished, not venturing to take further part in the conference between the higher authorities.

"Is there no ould rags up in them big presses that you could tack together and hang up to the windows?" said Kerrigan.

"Nothin' that wouldn't be worse than the bare paint, and not much of that same left. But I'm thinking that blay calico wouldn't look too bad, if I had enough of it. I could send a boy on the pony to the town for it. It'll have to be the big yellow room for her, anyway. There's a fine marble chimney-piece, and the paper on the wall is a grand colour, if the damp hadn't made patterns of its own on it. And I'll put a few darns in the carpet that'll hardly be noticed. An' sure, with the bed warm enough and a good fire and plenty of turf in the barrel beside it, we needn't be altogether pityin' her."

"And if she doesn't like it she can leave it," said Kerrigan, and hurried off to dispatch a boy on the pony to fetch the blay calico.

Meanwhile the Major was not thinking at all of the unfitness of his domicile for the reception of a lady, but only of his disgust at the prospect of the visit, and the necessity for making up his mind as to whether he ought to write the note of invitation himself, or leave it to his mischievous friend to make him answerable for some extraordinary production of which he could never even

know the gist or wording. The thought of what such a document might bind him to caused him extreme alarm.

He decided at last on accepting the lesser evil, feeling that in penning his own letter he was at least keeping his hold on the reins of this wild adventure.

CHAPTER XIII

An Ogre's Castle

On a drizzling day in January Mrs. Emmeline Turbary, in a vehicle piled with luggage, was driven along the approaches to Glyn Castle, seeing nothing on one side of her but a bleak country, mapped out with stone fences; and on the other high crags, backed by ferocious, white-maned waves of the sea.

At last the grey pile of Glyn came in view.

"An ogre's castle!" groaned the lady. "And now for the ogre!"

All the inhabitants were outside the door to receive the visitor, all except the host, who was within on the staircase, still struggling with his unwillingness to go a step farther.

"It isn't a case of the white cat's castle, however," thought the lady, "with nothing but a pair of hands to open the door!"

There was a little storm of curtsying and bowing and murmuring, and then the guest was floated into the hall as if on the wings of welcome, and taken possession of reverentially by Mrs. Brennan.

"I never was so disappointed in my life," said one of the maids. "It was nothin' but a common coach from Galway, an' the man to be paid, as if she was a tourist!"

"An' what would y' have, girsha?" said Kerrigan.

"Would y' leave the decent man without his money—an' the weather that's in it?"

"Well, now, I thought myself it would be four horses with outriders," said the cook, "the same as I saw in Dublin, when the Lady Lieutenant would be goin' in state somewhere."

"Have y' no sense?" said Kerrigan. "Would any lady bring her own horses and outriders into Connaught with her?"

"An' as far as I could see she's no such great beauty," said another girl.

"Nor too young," said the first.

"Oh, the conceit of ye, girls!" said Kerrigan. "Thim that thinks they're beauties themselves is always down on the rest of their sect!"

The Major had received his guest with stiff politeness at the foot of the stairs, and retreated to the drawing-room to await impatiently the appearance of Mr. Ferrall, whom he had besought to stand by him on this occasion by dining and sleeping at the Castle.

"Never was so glad to see anyone in my life, Ferrall," said the Major, grasping his friend's hand.

"I seem to have come as a relief force, the Castle being besieged and taken," said Ferrall.

"You and I have had our skirmishes, Ferrall, but we have never been enemies. And this is one of the most desperate engagements of my life."

"Oh, not an engagement yet, I hope!" said Ferrall.

"Now, my friend, I am not in a humour for joking," said the Major.

"More's the pity," said Ferrall. "Nothing else helps one so well out of a difficulty."

"Powder and ball are the only things that ever helped

me out of my corners," grumbled the Major, "and this is not a case for such methods."

"Do not meet the occasion of feminine beleaguerment?" said Ferrall. "For a defenceless soldier you have been severely tried. We shall see now which invasion you will find the more intolerable, that of the insolent little maid, or of the—— We have not yet got an adjective to describe the experienced dame.

"As for the girl, Ferrall, she can play a game of cards. I wonder if Mrs. Turbary can do as much."

"Depend on it, she can," said Ferrall. "A lady of her character does not travel about the world without such knowledge."

"What do you know about her character?"

"Nothing but what you have told me. She may be the ideal of everything that is noble and womanly for anything I am aware of to the contrary."

"She may be a saint or an angel now," growled the Major, "but I have known her as a coquette and a jilt."

"Hush—h!" said Ferrall. "Your language is hardly parliamentary, Major. You must put bygones out of your mind, and scrape up a gentlemanly smile to welcome your cousin's widow."

"If Gytrash were only here!" groaned the Major. "His jeers and his absurdities would carry the situation."

"We will carry it without him," said Ferrall.

"Here she is!" whispered the Major, as the door opened and a figure in softly brilliant draperies floated into the room.

"On my word, a dazzling apparition!" thought Ferrall.

"Not a bit like Emmeline!" thought the Major.

THE MAJOR'S GUEST

"That young adventuress had a sylphlike figure and fair hair."

Mrs. Turbary was looking very well after her cold drive, and her dress was charming, though more suitable for dinner with the Duchess of Doldrums at Tam Towers than with two old bachelors on the foreshore of a district in Connaught. Its colour and texture were grounds for a quarrel between Norah and Bridget, who had hidden behind the old clock on the landing to see how far the lady was going to redeem her character for grandeur by an exhibition of what she had got in "them tremenjous big trunks of hers".

"It's all pure gold," said Norah. "Cloth of gold, the way the fairies wear it."

"That's only the colour of it," said Bridget. "It's satin, it is."

"Ye foolish creatures!" said Mrs. Brennan. "It's silk and gauze. Didn't I help to put it on her? 'And, oh, Mrs. Brennan,' says she, 'I would have brought my own maid, only people are so silly over there; they are afraid to come to Ireland for fear they'll be killed.'

"'We don't do any killing in this castle, your ladyship,' I says, quite cool."

"Maybe you ought to have said 'your grace'," said Kerrigan.

"Ah, now, my man, you know too much!" said Mrs. Brennan. "It's only dutchies and archbishops that gets that title. But all the same, such a string of jewels as I had to fasten round her neck for her!"

"I saw them," said Norah. "I never seen anything shine in the dark before, barrin' it was the cat's eyes."

Meanwhile the soup was being discussed in the dining-room, and the visitor was describing rapturously her

impressions of the beauty of the country. What a sea! What cliffs! England so tame in comparison! To live in such a spot must be to breathe poetry. No wonder if people of taste preferred such surroundings.

"I'm glad you are of that opinion, Mrs. Turbary," said the Major. "I hope you will still hold it when you have made a few excursions across our bogs. Ireland is not quite a new country to you. I think you have been in more picturesque parts of it."

"Ah, yes, when I was young, too young to remember! Is any part more beautiful than this, Major Turbary?"

"You were old enough to see your way out of it, ma'am," said the Major grimly.

"We do not consider this the most beautiful part of Connaught," said Ferrall, hastening to prevent the Major from committing himself to rudeness, "but it has its beauties. I am fond of a bog myself, apart from its uses."

"I don't care for mere use," said Emmeline. "Beauty and courage are what I worship. And speaking of beauty, Major, I hope I am to have the pleasure of meeting the Lady Honoria Turbary? Our cousin Gytrash assures me that she is something quite remarkable."

"The rascal!" muttered the Major, and swallowed a wicked expletive with the last spoonful of his soup. Ferrall gave him a side glance full of sly humour, and answered for him gravely.

"Lady Honoria is at present on a visit with friends in the neighbourhood. She will probably return in the course of a few weeks, when, I am sure, she will have pleasure in meeting you."

"Weeks!" thought the Major. "Save me from my

friends! Does Ferrall expect this lady to remain for weeks at Glyn?"

"I was surprised to learn that our late cousin, Finbarr, had been married, and had left a daughter," said Mrs. Emmeline.

"So was I," growled the Major, "and I am not very sure of it yet."

"Oh, yes, you are!" said Ferrall, and gave him another look, intended to put his friend on his guard.

"He never confided his affairs to me," said the Major, not quite understanding Ferrall.

"Then there is some doubt in the matter?" said Mrs. Turbary.

"Did you ever see the Earl—I mean, when you were not too young to remember?" asked the Major.

"Oh, yes, I recollect him!" said Mrs. Emmeline.

"Then you will say there is not much doubt when you have seen the young lady," said the Major. And then Ferrall cleverly turned the conversation into another channel, hoping Lord Gytrash was well when Mrs. Turbary saw him.

Emmeline felt that there was a check, but did not appear to see it, and proceeded to praise her English cousin.

"Such a dear, good fellow! Welcomed the exile home as if she had been his sister, instead of only his cousin's widow. Is so interested in my boy, and so anxious that the Major should push him forward in a military career. Indeed, that is how I come to be in Connaught, rather forcing myself on the hospitality of a distinguished soldier who I am happy to remember is also a relative."

The Major made some kind of sound intended to be taken as responsive to, if not appreciative of, the praises

of his friend and the flattering allusions to himself; and Ferrall continued to help him out of his difficulties, keeping up the conversation by such leading questions to the lady as enabled her to pour forth a large amount of tender sentiment and exalted feeling on a number of subjects: and thus supported, the Major became more amiable before dinner was ended.

Later on, a few rounds of the Irish game of "spoiled five", which fortunately was not among the things of her youth forgotten by Mrs. Turbary, further mollified the humour of her host. And so the dreaded evening concluded not quite as unsuccessfully as might have been expected.

When the lady had retired, the Major grasped Ferrall's hand.

"My friend, you have stood to me like a man. You have helped me to effect a breach into the impossible, but you must stop and see me through it. Promise that you will not desert me to-morrow."

Ferrall laughed.

"What will become of my pupils while I am philandering with you and Mrs. Turbary?"

"Confound——!"

"No, I can't have you confound my pupils. If you damage their brains I shall have to go to war with you."

"Let them have a holiday."

"You will be getting fiercely jealous of me."

"Sir!"

"The lady is agreeable, and there was an early romance, you know."

"Do you want me to run away, sir?" shouted the Major.

"A soldier never does. You will stand to your guns."

"I am sorry, sir, that I ever told you——"

"No, no, old friend, you need not be sorry. I am only chaffing, to raise your spirits. A little sense of the humour of the thing is the only help for you in this difficulty."

CHAPTER XIV

Emmeline's Perplexities

A FEW days later Mrs. Turbary wrote again to her friend in India.

"Oh, dear Carrie, what a dreary place is this, and what a dreadful old gentleman is my cousin the Major! Glyn Castle is simply a barrack. The room I occupy—ah, what a change from my sweet apartments at Tam Towers! A pack of hungry winds bellowing at the windows, the sashes shaking with a noise like a watchman's rattle. A whirlwind of draughts in the room, almost lifting me off my chair while I write. What they call here 'turf' burning in the grate, with every now and then a puff of smoke coming down the chimney. Curtains of raw, unbleached calico, carpet worn and threadbare, the armchair I sit in antique certainly, but recently mended with glue. The damp has got at the quicksilver of my looking-glass, with the result that I have no chance of seeing in it anything but a caricature of myself. I asked the maid who comes to me why they had not given me a more comfortable room, and she curtsied and said:

"'It's the best room we have, your highness. Sure Mrs. Brennan took a lot of trouble with it, and myself thought it was beautiful.'

"'Where is the Lady Honoria's room?' I enquired, thinking they ought to have given it to me, as she is now absent.

"'Deed an' you wouldn't like it,' said the girl with a grin. 'It's nothin' but a nattick.'

"'What kind of place is that?' I asked.

"'It's an English word, your highness, but I can't tell the meaning of it, barrin' that it's a room up next the roof, with nothin' in it.'

"'Oh, an attic?' I suggested.

"'That is what I said, the very word,' said the girl, and retired with another curtsy.

"'Now, what is the meaning of all this?' I ask myself. I am beginning to think that there is no such person as the Lady Honoria Turbary, that she is a creature invented as a kind of practical joke by that provoking fellow Gytrash, a joke kept up at his desire by his friends in Connaught. I say 'friends', because there is a person here named Ferrall, who, though not another cousin, seems to enjoy all the privileges of a relative of the family. He it was who told me at table on the night of my arrival, and with a peculiar look at the Major, that the Lady Honoria was absent on a visit to people in the neighbourhood. And all my enquiries have failed to inform me of who those people are, and where they are located. Indeed, I have not been able to hear of any persons of importance living within many miles of this solitary domicile, which seems to me to have been intended more for a watch-tower in defence of the coast than as a dwelling for ordinary beings. No other buildings have I seen, except some clusters of miserable cabins and a few little bleak-looking farm-houses.

"This Ferrall, I may tell you, is a very agreeable and obliging person, a man who has seen the world, and knows what is going on in every country in Europe. How he contents himself in this place I do not know, but I suppose it is because he is, as he tells me himself, a philosopher. He is staying in the Castle at present, but has a small house, which he calls his snail-shell, some distance away, at which he has invited me to lunch one day on crabs and oysters, the only edibles to be had over there, he declares, now that the fishermen can catch no fish for want of a harbour.

"Then (by the way), I said: 'That is so like their laziness! Why don't they get up early in the mornings and build themselves a harbour?'

"'Will you give them the money to quarry the stones, Mrs. Turbary?' he said.

"'I am too poor,' I said.

"'So am I, and so are they,' he said; and then we had a discussion about these miserable people which I need not report to you. He seems to have quite a morbid interest in them. I say morbid, because what is the use of dwelling on ills that you cannot remedy? It would be much more to the purpose if he would exert himself to consider the prospects of my poor boy, for he has evidently great influence with our cousins, Gytrash and Turbary.

"But to return to this Lady Honoria. My mind keeps running on her, and on the probable causes for the silence with which her name is always received when I mention it. I keep wondering about her age, her character, her attractions, and the position which she holds among these men who will not talk about her. My questions are evaded, my sympathetic re-

marks touching her are unheeded. I must, however, continue to take for granted that she exists, or I may fall into irreparable mistakes; and acting on this I approached the interesting subject this morning with Mr. Ferrall.

"'When am I to have the pleasure of seeing my young relative, Lady Honoria?' I asked. 'Surely I am not to return to England without making her acquaintance.'

"Ferrall looked mysterious.

"'That will depend on several things,' he said.

"'I am naturally interested in her,' I said. 'I had believed my son to be the only young person of the family. I did not know that the Earl of Finbarr had left a child.'

"Ferrall looked at me and said:

"'Ah!'

"Was it not provoking? I felt it so, and resolved to make him speak.

"'Is it supposed that the Earl has left any other children besides this young lady? If he has not left a son, my boy can claim to be heir to the title.'

"'Is the Earl of Finbarr dead?' asked Ferrall.

"'Of course he is dead,' I said.

"'Can you prove it?' asked Ferrall.

"'After so many years it is not necessary to prove it,' I answered.

"'I think it is,' he said. 'And, pray, how do you suppose your son could support the title?'

"Then I spoke out boldly. 'As the only young person in the family, the sole representative of a younger generation, I should expect that these older men, my cousins Gytrash and Turbary, would make him heir to

all they possess, and thus render him fit for the position to which Providence has called him.'

"'So this is your ambition,' he said. 'It is not for me to say whether or not it is likely to be gratified.'

"'No,' I said, 'but you can tell me something more about this Lady Honoria!'

"'What has she got to do with your ambition?' he asked.

"'Oh, I don't know!' I said. 'Nothing at all, I suppose. But it is another young person in the family——'

"'And may divide the interest—perhaps carry off the fortune,' he said.

"Then, Carrie, it struck me that I had been imprudent, and in giving way to impatience, and yielding to an impulse of curiosity, I had betrayed the dislike I feel for a creature who was so extraordinarily praised by my cousin Gytrash.

"'You are jealous of this girl whom you have never seen,' said Ferrall.

"'Naturally I prefer my own child to any other,' I said.

"'Well, Mrs. Turbary,' he said, 'I advise you to put these matters out of your mind. I do not think that either Lord Gytrash or Major Turbary has made up his mind to make over his fortune, such as it may be, to any other person. Either or both may yet marry——'

"I started. You may imagine, Carrie, what a shock those words gave me. What could the man mean? I remembered that I was wearing a becoming hat, and that the breeze had probably given me a youthful colour.

"'And,' he went on, 'the Earl of Finbarr is not known to be dead.'

"'How is it known that he was ever married?' I asked.

"'How is anything known,' he answered, 'except by evidence?'

"'Where did the marriage take place?' I enquired.

"'In Norway, I understand,' was his reply.

"'Then his daughter is a Norwegian. And you are sure he had no son?' I asked.

"'I have not been made aware of the existence of a son. But then, neither am I certain that he has not sons.'

"Again I lost my patience.

"'You believe that he is alive, and may have sons?'

"'I know nothing about it,' he said.

"'Well then, Mr. Ferrall,' I said, 'if you are not aware of the existence of sons, I am not aware of the existence of a daughter. I believe the Lady Honoria Turbary to be a myth.'

"'As you will, Mrs. Turbary,' he said, with a little shrug. 'Only look at those gulls, how they fly inland! We shall have a storm.'

"And then we saw the Major strutting along the cliffs to meet us.

"Now, my dear friend, I know not whether I have been wise or foolish in provoking these remarks from Mr. Ferrall, but they have given me very anxious thoughts. The suggestion that these cousins of mine may yet marry gives me pause. Suppose Gytrash were to marry this Lady Honoria, there would be an end to all my hopes. Their unwillingness to introduce her to me, or even to let me know where she is at

present, seems to hint that they fear I should in some way or other want to interfere with her. If this is the case their suspicion must have been aroused before I discovered my mind to Ferrall, and an uncanny power of divination must have been at work. It is of Gytrash I think. Turbary is a minor creature altogether, though of course even a small estate in Ireland, with an ancient castle standing on it, is not to be quite despised, and I am doing my best to conciliate the gruff old gentleman who is owner of it. I play cards with him every evening, and I allow him to win, which puts him in good humour. I say to him: 'Really, Major, I am accounted a very good player in India; but I have no chance with you!' There is always a little money in the question, and you will say it must be expensive, but I look on what I spend in this way as an investment. And for ready cash I have to thank my cousin Gytrash. Only think! when I was leaving Tam Towers he put a cheque for one hundred pounds inside a pretty parcel of some dozens of gloves and handed it to me.

"'As I am turning you out,' he said, with one of his queer smiles, 'you will allow me to contribute to your travelling expenses.' Was it not sweet of the dear fellow?

"And now, dear Carrie, I beg you will think all these matters over, and give me your impressions and your wise counsel. Meanwhile I am in pursuit of the Lady Honoria. The Major had a letter from Gytrash in which he speaks of coming over soon. But what 'soon' may mean nobody knows. Ferrall laughs, and says he is always coming 'soon'."

CHAPTER XV

A Delightful Task

It was a cold, clear morning in the end of January, with snow still on the mountain tops, the ocean a grey world bounded by another grey world of sky, the rough beach of broken crags and boulders drenched by racing waves, white with their own foam and with the wings of the gulls that rode them in.

On the high shingle above the tide and below the cliffs, sheltered by a beetling headland, Heber and Honoria were at work together upon something.

Heber, a well-grown youth of eighteen, with a square brown face and strong dark brows and eyes, was hammering pieces of timber together, while Honoria's fingers were busy with some lighter structure, directed from time to time by a quick word or a sharp glance from her companion. They were constructing a model of an airship of Heber's invention which he intended to surpass in power and safety of winged travelling all the vehicles of the kind that as yet have climbed the air, to dare the dangers of the sudden gale, the capricious squall, and the prolonged tempest.

It was a piece of work that had been on hand for a considerable time, and still longer in mind. The pair of friends had talked it over and thought it out so long and so eagerly that it had become the one interest of their lives, and occupied all the daylight hours not

filled by their studies with Mr. Ferrall. They had now a holiday, as their master was visiting Major Turbary, helping to entertain a lady guest who had unexpectedly dropped into the Castle.

So the cold days from morning till dusk were devoted to the delightful task, and when the light failed, all the constructions and materials were stowed away in a dry cave above the sea foam, after which the workers ran off along the cliffs or across the heather, to see what the people in the cabins here or there, on bog or foreshore, were doing. They were welcomed into the little shanties where men, women, and children had gathered in, after the day's struggle with such ways and means as were possible for the maintenance and endurance of life, and were to be found grouped round the turf fire which was about the only comfort that the cabins could boast of. Here they heard news of all the hopes, fears, ailments, and illnesses of the families visited, and of their neighbours; sat with them on an inverted turf cleeve, or a block of bogwood, or anything else that came "handy"; and sometimes lingered long, listening to stories of weird apparitions, faery music, banshee cries, strange comings and goings of indescribable beings whose voices were in the air even when their forms were invisible. Everywhere was dire poverty, and the question of how long the bag of meal from the shop in the town would last to feed so many mouths was the burning question of the hour. Heber often brought a little "screw" of tea in his pocket for the granny, or a bit of tobacco for the old man; and Honoria would produce a little pot of butter, or a morsel of bacon, sent by Mrs. O'Donovan as a relish in contribution to the food of the family.

"Welcome, Heber! welcome, little lady!" was the cry that greeted their appearance; and "beannacht Dé leat!" ("God bless you both!") followed them when they departed.

Then another tramp across the bog paths and along the cliffs brought them to the little sheltered spot where stood the O'Donovan farm-house, and in the small trim house-place Mildred awaited them, the table spread for the evening meal, the cakes baked, and the kettle singing on the hot hearth flags. The place would be lighted up by the turf fire, and the tins and platters on the neat dresser would give back the shine from the flame. If Mildred had accepted the position of a lowly farmer's wife, and made no claim to any higher rank, she had known how to give dignity and refinement to her humble surroundings.

She listened with interest to Heber's enthusiastic talk about his airship, rather amused at his fantastic ambition than believing in the probable realization of his dreams. That he had a daring spirit and a taste for engineering she had long ago discerned, and her hope for his future was high in proportion to her perception of his industry and energy.

"Heber can make anything you want, if you can give him any kind of materials, from a bit of rusty iron to a plank of timber out of the sea," she said to Mr. Ferrall, when he came to see her and tell her about the progress of her son in mathematics.

"He certainly has an inventive brain and a turn for construction," said Ferrall. "But we shall see. We must be moderate in our expectations; every clever youth is not bound to turn out a genius."

"Oh, as for the airship," said Mildred, "I dare say

we shall soon hear no more about that! He expects too much; but a first disappointment will not injure him. There is some kind of big power in my lad, Mr. Ferrall, and it will conquer difficulties yet. I wish it would grapple with something on the solid earth. The idea of human beings flying is still to me uncanny."

"Steam and electricity were uncanny not long ago," said Ferrall, "and the fact remains that the solid body of a bird is carried by its wings securely through the air."

"So says Heber," said Mildred. "He will sit on the rocks studying the gulls dipping and flying, and he has got an idea of his own as to imitating their movements."

"There is nothing quite original in that," said Ferrall, 'but I don't say that Heber has not gathered something original from such persistent observation."

After supper the young people would climb the little narrow stair to the room which Mrs. O'Donovan no longer called her "Memory Chamber", but was now profanely described as the schoolroom, and which, warmed and brightened with fire and light, made quite a snug retreat while the wind roared round the low, thick walls, and hardly shook the little deep-set windows. The table was soon covered with Heber's books, and maps, and drawings, while he planned and calculated, and Honoria wrote down his notes, and followed him in all the ramblings and flights of his inventive imagination. With Ferrall's help he had gathered together notes of all the arctic explorations ever undertaken, and all the pictured representations of snow wastes and glaciers, ice mountains, and crevasses which had ever been traversed by the feet of men. For he

was on the track of the lost Earl of Finbarr, and Honoria travelled with him heart and soul along that track, as though, sitting there at a table in a little farm-house on a foreshore of Connaught, they could find him somewhere among the folds and lines of these charts of unimaginable snow wastes and ice-blocked regions.

Heber's intention was to construct an airship that would sail across the dreadful wastes where so many brave men had lost their lives and left their bones, and so to reach the goal of their desires, searching those ice-realms as the voyage proceeded, and rescuing forlorn travellers, especially coming to the assistance of the long-lost Earl of Finbarr.

Honoria never doubted that Heber would be able to perfect his invention, but she saw his difficulty when he said: "The question will be how to get money to work the thing out. But I am not bothering about that now. One thing at a time is enough. When my model is finished Mr. Ferrall will bring it under the notice of scientific authorities."

"I intend to go to London to collect the money," said Honoria.

"How?" asked Heber.

"I have a plan," said Honoria. "I will stain my face brown, and dress like one of those foreign women who travel about with a tambourine, and a young bear. They sing and beat the tambourine, and the bear dances. I saw them in Waterford, and people said they made a lot of money."

"You couldn't do it," said Heber.

"I could do anything I made up my mind to," said the girl.

"And you would not be allowed. You are the Lady Honoria Turbary, and your people would prevent you."

"They wouldn't care, and I don't care about them. I have given up my title, and I will be only 'Noreen' until I find my father. Who cares anything about me except you and your mother, and poor old Mauria, who is praying for me in Waterford? My father's kinsmen have despised and forgotten me. There is a lady of the family staying at present at the Castle. They have not sent for me to meet her. They have not told her that my father's child is in existence. I am nobody to them, and they shall be nobody to me."

"All the same, you could not go begging about the world with a bear and a tambourine. Mother could not allow it, and it would break my heart."

"Why—when it would be done to help you?"

"It's silly to talk about it. People would only laugh at you, and the bear would bite you."

"I shouldn't be afraid of him. I would make him fond of me."

"A bear is not a dog, nor a cat. So put that nonsense out of your head, Noreen. When the model is finished and tested and approved of, we will think about the enterprise. I find that every great venture that ever was attempted had to struggle with the difficulty of ways and means to set it going. And the ways and means were found. All that is necessary will turn up at the proper moment."

Into the midst of these counsels walked Mr. Ferrall, who sometimes dropped in of an evening to see how his pupils were spending their time.

"My boy, I warn you that you are aiming at an impossibility," he said, smiling at the maps and plans and

notes, and the eloquent exposition of his views and hopes that Heber was quick to pour out upon him.

"All right!" said Heber. "It is exactly what I want. Anybody can do what is possible. A hundred years ago things were called impossible that are quite easy now."

"Well, go ahead!" said Ferrall, laughing; "but don't expect me to fly with you when you have conquered your machine."

"I will fly with him," said Honoria.

"I shouldn't wonder," said Ferrall. "A pair of wild geese!"

When bidding good night to Mrs. O'Donovan, he turned at the door and said:

"I think it is as well that our little Lady Honoria is not about the Castle at present. A lady is there whom I am not anxious she should meet. If this lady should call to see you, she will naturally suppose that Noreen is your daughter."

"Is she likely to call to see me?" asked Mildred.

"I do not know. She is curious about the residents in the neighbourhood. I hope I am not uncharitably minded in thinking that she would not be a friend to the daughter of the Earl of Finbarr. We will let her go without testing her goodwill. Our little lady's position is at present too insecure for the inviting of jealousy."

CHAPTER XVI

"Have I Injured You?"

THERE could be no doubt that Mrs. Turbary was exercising a mollifying influence on the Major's temper. Her tender attention to his wants and wishes, her pleasing good looks and charming dress, her stupidity at cards, which so often threw the game into his hands, all had their effect in making life more agreeable to him. Into the weird drawing-room she had introduced several softening innovations. One or two warmly coloured cushions placed on the skeleton sofa, some bright Indian embroideries draping the gaunt screen, a fur rug spread in front of the fire—these novelties were noticed by the Major with grunts of approval. He could not but perceive that the presence of the lady had made his surroundings more pleasant, and even Mr. Ferrall unwillingly admitted the improvement. In the housekeeper's room the changes were freely discussed.

"To think of her bringing all thim things with her," said Kerrigan, "as if she was intendin' to stay here all her life. No wonder for her to have trunks like movin' houses."

"She brought them as a present to the Major, of course," said Mrs. Brennan. "Sure it's out of India all them beautiful fal-lals do come."

"Then I wish they had stayed in India," said Kerrigan, "for I don't believe there's any good behind her presents to the Major. What does she be flatterin' him for at all, at all? She's as sharp at cards as anyone I ever see when Mr. Ferrall's at play with her, and she pretends that the Major can beat her."

"You're a jealous old man, Kerrigan," said the housekeeper. "Why wouldn't the Major have a visitor that makes things pleasant to him and to all of us, when it stops his scoldin' a bit? Do y' want to keep him all to yourself? Sure, if it comes to that, you're the only one that can manage him, and the rest of us has to suffer for it."

"I declare I wouldn't mind her so much," said Kerrigan, "if she didn't be wantin' us to be thinkin' she was English! Or if she was English itself! What fault do I ever find with Lord Gytrash when he is among us? The laughy gentleman he is, and his hand knows its way to his pocket. But them Irish that's ashamed of what they ought to be proud of, wantin' to be what they're not, and their own tongue against them, and the rale English laughin' at them—they're what the immortal soul within in me can't abide, Mrs. Brennan, an' that's the inside an' out of it, English and Irish, whatever way you put it."

"Drink your tea, Mr. Kerrigan, man, and don't be choking yourself with your food, for nonsense!"

Kerrigan devoted himself to his tea for a few moments, and then broke out again.

"Not a hair on her head is English," he asseverated, throwing one knee over the other and preparing to argue out his point comfortably. "Not a single hair, barrin' it might be in the wig she bought in London."

"You're out there," said Mrs. Brennan. "Bridget says it's her own hair, with a little stuff like port wine, out of a bottle, that she sprinkles on it. And it does get a fine colour, Mr. Kerrigan, unless when the sea air makes a muddle of it. When I lived with Lady de Waltz she never would go near the seaside—— But there's the Major's bell, and you'd better be off. He does be very particular about dressin' for dinner since Mrs. Turbary came to sit down with him."

"And very particular about the dinners you send them," retorted Kerrigan, gathering himself up to depart on duty. "It's herself can critickize them.

"'It isn't bad soup,' she'll say; 'but if you would tell your cook to do this, that, or t'other,' she says. 'I have a beautiful receipt from India that I could give her,' says she, and so——"

"She sent us the receipt," said Mrs. Brennan, "and it would burn your mouth to cinders. But hurry on, will you now, for the bell will be at you again in about another half a minute!"

It was about this time that, in the course of her exploring rambles about the neighbourhood alone, Mrs. Turbary was overtaken by rain, and looked around her for a roof under which she could take shelter. Not for worlds would she have entered one of the poor cabins, the doors of which stood ever invitingly open to man or beast that might be in need of hospitality. Even a glance into their smoky interiors in passing always made her cough, she said, and she was sure the people who were able to breathe in them must be barbarians!

On this occasion it happened that she was quite near Mrs. O'Donovan's little farm-house when the rain began

to fall heavily, and despite her disgust at the dwellings of the peasantry, she felt constrained in self-defence to test their reputation for hospitality to the stranger. And, after all, this was by many degrees superior to any of the houses that had hitherto attracted her notice. It was quite a nice little homestead, in fact unusually so for a Connaught foreshore; and though the door was shut against the rain, the ruddy firelight shone invitingly behind the windows.

At sound of her tap the door flew open, disclosing a small but delightfully cosy-looking interior. The walls were well hung with delf, pewter, and some pieces of old china and silver, with here and there a warmly coloured picture in oleograph. At the table covered with white work Mrs. O'Donovan was busy with her sewing machine; and Honoria was baking bread at a sideboard. It was a picture of simple and contented lowly life that was entirely new to Mrs. Turbary. The glow of the big red fire that was on everything, the red glitter from the homely decorations on the walls, the warmth and sweetness in the faces of the woman and girl, even the air of imperturbable contentment in the attitudes of the cat and dog basking on the hearth, all struck the intruder as expressive of a peculiar kind of prosperity, in enviable contrast with the barren grandeur of the Castle of Glyn.

She was warmly welcomed. Her wet cloak was taken from her shoulders and placed at the fire. Her boots were removed, and dry slippers were substituted. Tea was made, and a little of the freshest cream was served with it. Mrs. Turbary enjoyed herself thoroughly. It was a new feature of life at Glyn, and any variety in the monotony of her days was agreeable. She com-

plained of the Irish weather, and patronized her entertainers with an assumption of "English" superiority which would have exasperated Kerrigan.

"What rain! what rain!" she said, with her feet to the fire, and sipping her tea. "Do you always rain like this in Connaught?—I mean, of course, when you are not snowing."

"We get our share of winter," said Mildred, smiling, "but there is worse weather than ours in the world, or so they tell us."

She had readily identified her visitor, and Honoria also knew her as her kinswoman from the Castle, but both were on their guard against her probable curiosity. There was little fear on this account, however, as the lowliness of their condition secured them from any particular interest she might otherwise have felt in them.

"You can't think how delightful it is to a stranger from England to find people like you in this wild country, living quite like English cottagers, with all the neatness and civilization which one misses here so sadly."

"It is kind of you to say so," said Mildred. "May I give you another cup of tea?"

"Thank you! It is so good. I quite enjoy it. I see you don't boil it, as so many of the country people do. And your daughter here—it is she, I suppose, who makes these excellent cakes. In fact, I believe I caught her in the act."

"There is no denying that Noreen is our baker."

"Why should you deny it, or be ashamed of it? There is nothing so vulgar as to be ashamed of the duties of our state in life. And Noreen is quite a pretty name. But I have not heard your own name, Mrs.—Mrs.——"

"O'Donovan," said Mildred.

"Ah, an Irish name! And your husband is out farming, I suppose—too well used to weather to catch cold from the rain."

"My husband has been dead many years, madam."

"Ah! So has mine. He must have left you very comfortable, Mrs. O'Donovan. I thought Major Turbary's tenants were all extremely poor; he complains of being so poor himself. But I am glad to see he has some who are prosperous."

"We are thankful to the good God for what He has given us, madam."

"That is right. People in your station are so often thankless, because they have not got everything that they see others possessed of. They are too apt to covet their neighbour's goods. They never reflect that they are quite as well off, comparatively speaking, as their betters. They are not obliged to keep up castles, and large houses, and servants. Plain clothes suit them more comfortably than expensive dress——"

"And hunger is pleasanter to them than enough to eat," put in Honoria, speaking for the first time.

Mrs. Turbary put up her long glasses and looked at the girl attentively.

"Your daughter has a sharp tongue," she said. "I don't know that it is a very useful possession, or that it is wise in one of her class to exercise it in speaking to a lady."

"I should not think of doing so if I were speaking to a lady," said Honoria.

"You are a foolish creature," said Mrs. Turbary. "Are you not afraid of injuring your mother by your impertinence? I am Major Turbary's relative, and visiting at

the Castle. A word of complaint from me might do you mischief."

"If you were capable of such wickedness, nothing I could say would influence you," said Honoria, trembling with the excitement she was vainly striving to suppress.

Mrs. Turbary rose majestically.

"Well, Mrs. O'Donovan," she said, "it is a pity you did not bring up your daughter to a better sense of her duty. I think the rain is over now, and I will thank you for my cloak and shoes. I came here in a friendly spirit, and if you should suffer in consequence of the insult I have received in return, you will know whom to blame for it."

She was reclothed in her own garments by Mildred, and departed.

After she was gone, Honoria threw herself on her knees before Mrs. O'Donovan, crying: "Oh, Mother, Mother! Have I injured you with my rash tongue? She is not good! She is capable of hurting us!"

"Hush, my darling!" said Mildred. "Your tongue is rash again. Charity thinketh no evil. Probably she meant no harm. Her better thoughts will overcome the impulse of her irritated temper."

CHAPTER XVII

"It's All Purr with Her Now"

"SINCE writing to you last, dear Carrie," wrote Mrs. Turbary, "I have been doing my best to make life in this place a little less intolerable, and have succeeded where the Major is concerned, as he really becomes more civil, and sometimes even almost amiable, thanks to my constant endeavours to please him. It is a fatiguing effort, a great deal of pains for very little profit; but we must be thankful to Fate for the smallest favours, remembering the vulgar old proverb which says that 'beggars cannot be choosers', and which applies to many who are not absolute beggars.

"Besides my prudent flatteries and skilful blundering at cards, I have been studying the Major's rent roll and the circumstances of his tenants, and giving him the result of my observations in the form of a little good counsel. I always thought it very odd that he should be so poor, seeing that quite a good-sized tract of inhabited country here belongs to him. Quite by chance I discovered that some of his tenants are extremely well off, instead of being the impoverished creatures we have heard described. Taking refuge from the rain in one of the farm-houses, I found the people remarkably comfortable and well-to-do, and the mother and daughter far beyond their station in appearance

and speech, though the girl was exceedingly impertinent to me in return for my condescension in drinking their tea and amiably accepting their attentions.

"I have given my impressions of the visit to the Major, and he has been much struck by my suggesting that he ought to insist on getting more rent for a farm which enables those who live on it to enjoy such comfort. Indeed, when I compare the pleasant aspect of the room they were staying in, though of a lowly class, with the cold barrenness of his Castle, which ought to be replete with every luxury, I feel that there is something extremely wrong in the management of this estate.

"I perceive that the Major is quite roused and cheered by my views, and I think it is likely he will act on them. And though, of course, one ought not to be uncharitable or unforgiving, I confess I should not be sorry if that young person who was so impertinent to me were made to suffer some inconvenience on account of it. An increase in her mother's rent would teach her a useful lesson for the future restraining of her rudeness to her superiors."

It was true that the Major had listened willingly to his visitor's advice in the matter of improving his rent roll, as he had long believed that Mrs. O'Donovan held her farm too cheaply. He in no way connected the little Lady Honoria with the owner of this farm. Since Mrs. Turbary's arrival he had forgotten the girl's existence. One woman at a time was enough for him to take on his mind. If asked about Honoria, he would have supposed she was somewhere about the lower premises, assisting Mrs. Brennan in the housekeeping. It never occurred to him that the impertinent creature described by Emmeline as the daughter of the farm

woman was identical with the girl who had been thrust upon his bounty, who had grown up eating his crumbs, and whom he had never fully consented to recognize as the child of his cousin Finbarr. He had often said to Ferrall that Mrs. O'Donovan's rent ought to be raised, for that she was growing fat on his leanness; but Ferrall through pure argumentation had always reasoned him out of this belief. And now here was a sensible woman (for Emmeline had really gained a great deal of good sense since the days when he had known her) perceiving things from his own point of view, and making practical suggestions which proved her capable of materially assisting him in certain contemplated improvements on his estate. It was no doubt true, as she said, that Mrs. O'Donovan's case was illustrative of the general condition of the tenants, who were not all so poor as they represented themselves to be. She walked about the country and went into the houses, a thing the Major could never bring himself to do, and the impression made on her experienced mind was all of the idleness, laziness, and thriftlessness of the people who lived in them.

Dwelling on these matters, the Major resolved to act without consulting anyone, and while in the mood he wrote certain instructions to his solicitor.

Gytrash had never been in favour of such a movement, and the Major would not wait for his arrival, to be counselled by that freakish friend. Ferrall, he knew, would try to dissuade him from his purpose, and he was determined to give no opportunity to so obstinate a partisan of the lower classes. Kerrigan was the only person the Major was really afraid of. When his new course of action came to be made public he should,

he knew, have some bad half-hours with Kerrigan; but he had not passed through campaigns of fire and sword to allow a broil with his man-servant to intimidate him, and at present he was not shut up with the gout, so that the hour of danger was not imminent.

In the meantime, through that mysterious telepathy, or other extraordinary means, by which servants are enabled to know the secret minds and intentions of those they serve, Kerrigan was well aware of all that was meditated by his master, and of the steps that had already been taken towards carrying it out.

"Now, I'd give a mine of gold (if I had it) to see what Madam Cat puts in them letters she's always writin' to India. If I hadn't a conscience, and she didn't seal them with wax, bedad, I'd have a peep at them. But sure I know it all as well as if I seen through the envelope. Don't I hear her talking and I going about, though she changes the talk when I come into the room? 'What strange weather it is!' she'll say quite suddent, as if I didn't know that it wasn't the weather was in her head till she heard my foot. But clever as she is, I'm sometimes quicker at hearin' than she is."

"You oughtn't to be callin' names to a lady of the family," said Mrs. Brennan.

"Cat, is it? Maybe I oughtn't, but it's the decent poor pussy sittin' at the fire there that should be gettin' the apology. There's women that can purr and scratch. It's all purr with her now, but the scratch is comin'. And I'm feared there's many's the one in this place that'll feel the claw."

"Why, then, what do you mean? What's the lady goin' to do on us?" said Mrs. Brennan.

"Didn't I post the Major's letter to that solicitor of his in Galway that does be squeezin' the tenants? One, two, three letters, one followin' another; an' that wasn't the Major's way with things until the lady came, Mrs. Brennan. It was firin' off a letter once for all and have done with it, and he always had somethin' to say to myself about what was in it when I was takin' it out of his hand. But now it's mum to me, and half a dozen letters thrippin' each other, an' the lady smilin'; an' my soul to glory if herself isn't at the bottom of it!"

"Maybe it's kindness she's puttin' him up to," said Mrs. Brennan, sticking a knitting needle in her hair, and looking over her spectacles.

"Maybe it is," said Kerrigan, "and maybe it's kindness that's set her talking about Mrs. O'Donovan and the cheapness of her rent. She's been visitin' at the little farm, takin' her notes, and puts it down that our little Lady Honoria is Mrs. O'Donovan's daughter. An' the Major forgettin' all about the child, and lettin' this old one get the kind side of him! One way or another, Mrs. Brennan, things is in a muddle, and I'll write to his lordship in England to come over and see to it."

"And maybe you'll get your head in your hand for thanks," said Mrs. Brennan, taking her knitting needle out of her hair again and giving it a share in her work. "Take my advice, and don't be interferin' with the doin's of the quality. They have ways of their own the same as we have ourselves, only different. And it's short shrift you'd get maybe if you were caught spyin' and informin' on them. That same lord over there has a quare turn with him, and you wouldn't

know what kind of rumpus would come out of your writin' to him."

"Mrs. Brennan, you're not as long in the family as I am, ma'am, and you haven't the same knowledge of them you're talking about so glib. His lordship has a jeer in him, I don't deny, but it's not a bad jeer, and there's a good heart in under it for them that proves their worth. And I'll bet you the next pair of patent-leather pumps that the Major casts off to me against your knitting needles——"

"Much use your pumps would be to me!" said Mrs. Brennan scornfully.

"D'ye think I forget how glad ye were of a pair o' them the time your corns was bad, ma'am? 'O Kerrigan!' says you, 'isn't there heaven in a pair of big shoes when your feet's the way mine is!' And anyhow they would be more use to you than your needles would be to me, Mrs. Brennan. But if the bet's off, it's off, and you'll not get such an offer in a hurry again."

A peculiar sigh from Mrs. Brennan assured Kerrigan that she had dropped the reins of propriety and given him his head, and he proceeded to possess himself of a sheet of the Major's notepaper, and to write his appeal to Lord Gytrash. The letter was very short, and carefully worded:

"YOUR HONOUR, LORDSHIP,

"I take up my pen to tell you that the Major is not himself since a visitor came, and maybe your lordship would be comin to us.

"Your obedient servant,

"KERRIGAN."

"There's not much in that if I was brought to law about it," he said to himself, as he dropped some red wax on the envelope and sealed it with the royal head on a farthing. "And he'll be sure to open that, thinkin' it's the King is writin' to him."

"All the letters that has the King's head on them don't be written by His Majesty," said Mrs. Brennan tartly.

"He doesn't be responsible for stamps," said Kerrigan; "thim that's sold by the dozen for a penny apiece. But it's different with seals. Every important document has a seal to it."

"But not sealed with a farthing," persisted Mrs. Brennan. "Take care you're not put up for forging the King's head on a drop of my storeroom sealing-wax."

"Blethers!" said Kerrigan. "Let the pólis look to it. Good for them to have somethin' to do besides twirl their fingers, and look at theirselves in the bog-water to see if their caps is one side of their heads."

And the letter was posted, popped into the bag just the moment before it was handed to the postman.

"Jim never noticed it," said Kerrigan. "Only just took a sketch of it with one eye as I dropped it in. So it lies with the postmaster this side or the other side of the water. Let them do their worst on me, if only his lordship comes over."

"Well, all I can say is, that I wish you safe out of it," said Mrs. Brennan. "You've made an awful black mess of my beautiful red sealing-wax anyhow."

Lord Gytrash was disporting himself at Monte

Carlo when Kerrigan's extraordinary letter dropped on him.

"Hello!" he cried with a laugh. "Is this a new monarch in Ireland? A king's head on the seal, and signed 'Kerrigan'?"

He lit a cigar, and sat contemplating the letter.

"Bravo, Kerrigan!" he said several times between the puffs of smoke. "You've taken the measure of Mrs. Emmeline! Now, I wonder what he means by 'not himself', and putting it to the account of the visitor? 'Maybe your lordship would be coming to us'. And sure, maybe my lordship will, Kerrigan, my man; for I believe you have a head on your shoulders!"

CHAPTER XVIII

"Muddlers of Right and Wrong"

His lordship arrived unexpectedly at Glyn, to the great delight of Mrs. Turbary, and rather to the consternation of the Major, who felt a little ashamed of the good understanding established between him and the woman he had so dreaded and denounced, knowing that his Cousin Gytrash would make a joke of it.

When Gytrash produced a valuable present for the lady, the Major felt a little jealous, and his uneasiness took another turn.

"Now, Gytrash," he said, "we needn't be getting up rivalry at this time of day. Emmeline and I were quite becoming friends. She is immensely improved, and is really a very nice woman."

"Didn't I tell you so?" said Gytrash. "And can't we share her favours now, as we did years ago?"

"Oh, certainly, certainly!" said the Major; "but she has been kindly looking into my affairs, and I don't want you to distract her attention from them."

"What kind of affairs?" asked his lordship.

"Oh, I'll tell you another time!" said the Major, as at the moment Emmeline came into the room wearing the handsome furs which his lordship had presented to her.

"Why am I a poor man?" growled the Major to himself. "This rascal is determined to outdo me on every account."

Emmeline was all smiles, and felt herself a queen between her two devoted subjects. Ferrall arrived for dinner, and over him she had no power; but with a loyal kinsman on each side of her what cause had she to care? At the end of the evening Lord Gytrash walked a piece of the way home with Mr. Ferrall.

"How have things been going here?" asked the lord. "Why has Kerrigan been writing to me that something is wrong?"

"Has he written? Plucky Kerrigan! We may reverse the proverb and cry: 'Angels rush in where fools have feared to tread'. I thought of it myself, but my intentions hung fire."

"What are the circumstances that have made a coward of you and an angel of Kerrigan?"

"Let me see. There is a tangle of discontent in Kerrigan's mind and in mine, which perhaps you won't care to unravel."

"Not good at picking knots, eh? Try me."

"For one thing, there's the position of little Honoria. The child has been banished from the Castle since before this lady came. The Major seems to have forgotten all about her. Good Mrs. O'Donovan is her protectress. Query: Is it desirable that the daughter of Finbarr, unfortunate as he has been, should grow up in a farmhouse and marry the farmer's son?"

"Is that likely to happen?"

"What could be more likely under the circumstances? He is a clever youth, and they are intimate friends. That is one thread of the tangle. My next query is: Does it not seem well that the girl should remain as she is until after Mrs. Turbary has departed?"

"Why?"

"The lady is jealous of her without having ever seen her. She professes to disbelieve in the girl's existence. I have thought it might be well if we could get her out of the country while in that state of unbelief. It could do the child no good to be brought under Mrs. Turbary's notice."

"You seem to have formed a very unfavourable opinion of my cousin's widow."

"Very," said Ferrall.

"I think she is a silly woman," said Gytrash, "and anxious to improve her fortunes by her wits, but your judgment seems to be harsher than mine. I should like to test her."

"I leave the matter in your hands," said Ferrall.

"I will introduce the Lady Honoria Turbary to her kinswoman, Mrs. Emmeline Turbary."

"Good!" said Ferrall. "On your shoulders be the responsibility. You may have the ill humour of the Major to deal with."

"I will bridle him, never fear!" said Gytrash. "Have you any more threads in your tangle?"

"There is a rumour that the tenants are to be squeezed for more rent, and that evictions are contemplated."

"An idle rumour, I should venture to say, remembering the vulgar old adage: 'You can't take blood out of a turnip'."

"The turnips can be mashed up in the quest, and thrown to the pigs," said Ferrall. "It is thought that Mrs. Turbary is interested in the experiment."

"I will test her there too," said Lord Gytrash. "Meanwhile we will give her the benefit of a doubt. I am obliged to my friend Kerrigan for inviting me to a highly interesting study of character. I will think

over this matter of the Lady Honoria. It is a long time since I saw the young person. I must go and look her up."

They were walking along the rough path above the rocky beach. There was a high tide, and a brilliant moon was riding the skies, troops of clouds flying before and after her, filmy wings and manes of fleece bearing her high above a dark sea that moved towards the shore in resounding rollers, to grip the rocks with deadly shock and thunder.

"Hello! What is that?" cried Lord Gytrash. "Is it a seal, or what?"

A dark figure of a strange shape was seen struggling out of the tide, and making a rush up the beach to escape the next roller.

"Seals don't carry loads of seaweed on their backs," said Ferrall. "That is some poor girl. I think it is one of the Laceys or Maillies, capturing the wrack for manure for the potato patch."

"Eh! What? Is it possible? It ought not to be allowed. How does she escape drowning?"

"And for that tussle for life with death she has to pay a tax to your cousin Major Turbary," said Ferrall. "Do you tell me that you have never been aware of this as one of the conditions of life on a Connaught foreshore?"

"I suppose I have heard of it," said Gytrash. 'One hears of many a thing without realizing until one has witnessed it."

"And these are the people whose rents are to be raised!" said Ferrall.

"Turbary is neither a knave nor a fool," said Gytrash. "A great deal of the mischief done in the world

is the doing of those who are neither knaves nor fools, but only muddlers of right and wrong, whose stupidity results in destroying what is best in life."

"These are the peculiar views held by you of which the Major has sometimes complained to me."

Ferrall laughed. "If the Major did not suffer himself, in his own way, from living on a Connaught foreshore, I don't think he would allow himself to be aware of those views, or would seek the society of your humble servant. But solitude makes one tolerant of any companionship, and there must be another face at the table sometimes, and a partner is needed at a game of cards, or an opponent at chess."

"Your views on character are not exactly optimistic," said Gytrash.

"No?" said Ferrall. "Well, I think I have always made the best of the Major. He is taken out of my hands now, however. Apart from my interest in the people, I am curious to see how far this lady will influence him to their injury."

"I don't see the Major with your eyes," said Gytrash. "I have always had a liking for my old friend Turbary, and I have never looked into his relations with these beggarly tenants of his. I have had a general kind of idea that it was rough on him to have so poor an estate. If it were not for the fishing and shooting I should look on this place as a kind of penal settlement. I don't think he would want to harm a fly, except in battle."

"I don't know about flies," said Ferrall. "I never was in battle, but I own to having killed a wasp. See, there is that girl climbing from the beach to the path before us. She is bent in two under the load of that

heaped-up cleeve of sea wrack, and the water is flowing from her, leaving a little river behind her as she walks. We shall wet the soles of our boots in it presently. That girl, who is stunted, aged, probably attacked by consumption in her struggle with the elements to produce a few potatoes against starvation, is taxed to give the Major a little more money to spend in London or Monte Carlo."

"My dear fellow, are you a socialist?" said Gytrash.

"I am not a dreamer. I am a moderate man, only asking for a little humane consideration over and above justice."

"What would you do with these poor creatures if the estate were your own?"

"I should make them a present of their potato patch and their share of the rocks, to make a subsistence out of them, if they could, by their suffering and labour. I should also give them what they can get, by toil, out of that bog, which would be no use to me if they left it on my hands. The fire that keeps life in them when food falls short is extracted from it by themselves, and is their own by royal grant of Mother Nature. Would you quench the fire that will save that girl from fever, if not from consumption, when she goes into yonder cabin in her saturated clothing, chilled to the heart under her load of water-logged sea wrack?"

"You are making out an excellent case for emigration," said Gytrash. "If things are as bad as you say, humanity ought not to be permitted to remain under such conditions."

"They go. They are going fast. If they did not go, and come, and fetch and send money, what would become of the Major's share of Monte Carlo? He does

not get his rents and taxes out of this streak of land and water."

"You have not told me what you would do for yourself after you had handed away your birthright to these people."

"I would realize whatever might be my own, and invest it in some honest way, contenting myself with the same percentage of interest as that which satisfies my friends who have not been born to the delusion that a birthright, or a purchase of poor land, entitles them to a double or treble income. I would not gain my luxuries by the sacrifice of flesh and blood."

"And you call yourself a moderate man!" cried Lord Gytrash. "Oh, yes, you may walk a piece back with me, and then I will see you home all the way. We have not nearly thrashed out this subject. I can't imagine how you and the Major have ever been able to get on together, despite the cry of solitude. I have heard of two plants (sorb and juniper, I think) which, if planted one on each side of a tree, will rend the tree asunder; or, if kept in the same house, the house will be burnt."

They walked back and forward long, forgetting the time, till at last Lord Gytrash said: "I must leave you now, or we shall be like the two old ladies who kept seeing each other home till morning dawned. And Kerrigan will be tearing his few hairs, thinking that his lordship has been carried off by the fairy phooka. An awful fate for a solid, matter-of-fact Saxon, wouldn't it be?"

CHAPTER XIX

Fireside Folklore

It was Mildred O'Donovan's kindly custom to gather together a little party of her poor, scattered neighbours of bog and shore, and to allow them to amuse themselves in her comfortable house-place.

It happened that the day after the recorded conversation between Lord Gytrash and Mr. Ferrall was Shrove Tuesday, a day when faithful observers of Lent will indulge themselves, if they can, with sweet pancakes, and with an outburst of that mirth which is always ready to spring up like a fountain of life out of the deepest depths of their melancholy.

Lord Gytrash knew nothing of this when he arrived at Mrs. O'Donovan's door and heard strains of music from within. Mildred was at her harp, delighting her guests with the pathetic old Irish melodies that had power to make them weep. The Englishman forbore to make an interruption by knocking, and stood in the mirky dusk at the window, so that he could see within and himself remain unseen.

Honoria was sitting at the fire with a poor woman's baby in her lap, the delicate mother, who had walked far, being tired.

Gytrash did not recognize her, but thought: "A beautiful creature—a very youthful mother. I wonder if any more of them are like that?"

He turned away, unwilling to pry or to intrude, and met Heber, a tall young fellow wearing a fisherman's sou'wester hat. Heber recognized and saluted him.

"Look here, my boy!" said Gytrash, "I want to have the pleasure of being one of your party. Can you take me in?"

Heber laughed. "It is an odd fancy, my lord. I should be glad to gratify you, but I am afraid the presence of your lordship would frighten our poor company away."

"Lend me your sou'wester, and I will bury my chin in this muffler of mine. My frieze coat will not betray me. Introduce me as a countryman from somewhere round the coast."

Heber entered into his lordship's humour, and introduced his big companion with a "God save all here, and give a welcome to a stranger!"

There was no difficulty about accommodating the chance guest with a seat, and, the harp music having ceased, tea and pancakes were served, and story-telling and ballad singing went round the circle.

"This good man from Galway would like to hear something about our own fairies," said Heber.

"Why, then, they're all gone since the youngsters do be goin' to America," said a lean, brown man. "It's little thim ones cares about the old and weak; it's the fine young boy and the handsome girl that they be lookin' after."

"Do they be follyin' them over to the Big Island yonder?" asked an old woman, with a laugh.

"Oh, faith, it's little welcome they'd get there!" said a boy. "Nobody would have time to be lookin' at them."

"Did anyone here ever see anything of the good people?" said Heber.

"My father did," said the lean, brown man. "It was the full of the moon, and he goin' into a big field at midnight, and it full of hurlers. Himself was a good hurler, and he went and joined them. One of them put a hurling stick in his hand, and bid him play away with it. They all called him by his name, and made great friends with him. At last the same man that gave him the stick told him to go out of the field, and not to look back till he was got past the gate. He looked back when he got out of the gate, and the hurlers were gone."

"I know as queer a story as that," said another. "A man my father knew had a hump on his back, and he fell asleep in a glen, and when he woke the fairies were round him. He heard them singin' Sunday, Monday, Tuesday over and over, and at last he called out "Wednesday". The fairies were delighted with the new day he gave them, and danced him about, an' carried him off to a king they had, and asked what good thing he would do for him. The king ordered the hump off his back, and the man went home without his hump. Well, there was another humpback in the place, and he off with him to the glen and listened for the fairies. And sure enough he heard them singin' 'Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday——'

"'Thursday!' shouted my brave humpy the second. But the fairies didn't like Thursday, why, I don't know; but sorra step further would they go than Wednesday. They jumped on poor humpy the second, and hauled him before the king. When his majesty heard 'Thursday' he was in a rage too, an' commanded the hump that come off the first humpy to be put on the second

humpy, on top of his own hump. An' my word to you but the poor crature came back to his people with two humps on his back instead of the one he went out with."

There was a burst of laughter and cries of:

"So itself!"

"Just like them!"

"It's betther not to be meddlin' with them."

"Ah, we have none o' them as gay as that in this part of the country!" said a woman. "They're all very sarious that we come across. An' any that ever seen their place come back sorra-ful."

"Did you ever know anyone see their place and come back?" asked Heber.

"I did," said the woman. "It was my own gran' aunt that used to be called away, whiles. She would be knittin' on her own floor, an' suddent she would rise her head and listen. An' then she would walk out of the door, an' walk away, knittin', knittin', away with her across the bog, till she got small to look at, and at last went out of sight. It was no use runnin' afther her, or callin' her, for she would never turn her head.

"It was give up every time that she would never come back any more. But still an' all she did. Afther three months or so she would be seen away beyont the bog, small at first and gettin' bigger, till at last she would come walkin', life size, through the heather, and would walk in same as if she had only been afther feedin' the hens, an' would sit down at the fire with her knittin'."

"How many stockin's did she knit while she was away, an' did she bring them back with her?" said a man, laughing.

"Nobody ever dar'd to ask her any questions," said the woman. "Once she said to my mother: 'I have

to go,' says she, 'but I never eat their bread, or I couldn't come back.'"

"What way did it end with her?" asked a girl with earnest eyes, staring at the speaker.

"It ended well. She come through it all. What she done nobody ever knew, but she put in the sentence that was laid on her. It worked off by degrees, an' at last she settled down quiet, an' died a good death."

"They tried hard to get her," said an old man, "but she disappointed them, the light o' Heaven to her!"

"I'll match that for a story," said another man. "I know two men that were crossin' the river, an' it late in the night, an' their feet on a narrow bit of a plank bridge where they had to walk one before the other, with scarcely room for a man's step at a time. An' as they were 'footin'' along, as cautious as y' please, what but two horsemen leapt past them, or over their heads, like the wind, or a flash o' fire. They never touched them, but just went over and through them, and they cried out as they flew:

> "'Walk by day and rest by night
> And let the wicked take their flight!'"

"Thim were ghosts," said another of the company. "Thim were not the enchanted people."

"No, nor the fairies," said another. "They were souls, God help us!"

"Y' may talk about the enchanted people," said old Lacey the fisherman, "but I seen a phantom ship myself. We were luggin' about among the islands out beyont, an' not a breath o' wind behind or before us, and sorra as much as a jabble on the sea, that was like a slab of lead. When och! whish! a splendid schooner

shot out of the dark, white sheets, full sail, flyin' as if she had wings to her. What did the like o' her want with wind to sail her, and she skiffin' along with the way of her own she has! I can tell you we all sat up, three of us in the hooker, and looked afther her. But soon it was the darkness had her again, and she was out o' sight. A little boy that was with us called out: 'Why has she got her sails full o' wind, and us has none?'

"'Whisht, child!' says I, 'an' be passin' no remarks. It isn't the natural wind she has, God betune us an' harm!' An' we said a prayer, an' went on pullin' with the oars."

"Did you ever see the ghosts of thim that's drowned at sea?" asked the schoolmaster, who had just come in.

"I didn't," said Lacey, "but I heard that there's seven poor fellows wandherin' the waves, not too far out from this shore. My wife does tell me that she hears them sighin' and prayin' in the night times; but myself sleeps sound. It's their penance for darin' the rage of a storm when they have no call to it."

"There's a ballad about somethin' like that," said a woman.

"There is," said the schoolmaster, "and I amused myself turning it into English."

"Brideen here can sing it," said the woman.

"Sing it, sing it!" cried several voices.

"Will you have it in the Irish or the English?" said the schoolmaster.

"Irish!" was the cry.

"Let it be the English," said Gytrash to Heber.

"Oh," said Heber, "our friend from Galway here isn't

as well learned in his Irish as we are, and he would like to hear the story in the English!"

"Here, then," said the schoolmaster, "Brideen has it both ways. I taught it to her myself. Sing up, Brideen!"

"Sing up, sing up!" was repeated by many voices; and Brideen, a little thin, brown girl, with bright dark eyes, and with a red handkerchief knotted round her shoulders, lifted up a shrill sweet pipe, like the note of a robin in winter, and sang a mournful ditty:

"One fearless fisher in deep seas,
Whose home was on yon looming island,
Would brave the very roughest breeze
For Mary of the storm-girt highland.

"The loud surf beats upon the shore,
Uneasy rolls the loosened shingle,
And Mary bars her cabin door
And stirs the red turf in the ingle.

"She sets her wheel beside the blaze,
Her flitting hand to labour steadies;
The dark wheel slits the ruddy haze
And whirls the light in sparkling eddies.

"But now her cheeks a-sudden pale;
The night is turning chill and dreary,
The wind has got a bitter wail,
The cabin room is lone and eerie.

"Some creeping sound is in her ear,
She jerks her wheel to stop its whirring;
Then tries to smile away her fear—
'T was nothing but the turf fire stirring!

"Wide opes the door without a sound,
And something dark and tall doth enter.
She rises up and stares around:
'T is Mick himself that stands fornent her!

"The chill sea from his garment drips,
The ocean spray his long hair whitens;
With livid cheeks and frozen lips
He glimmers as the fire-flame brightens.

"Like distant murmurs faint and rare,
Like dreamy echoes low and broken,
A voice comes stirring in the air,
And words like these are sadly spoken:

"'No more I dream of wife and home,
My phantom boat is waiting yonder.
Like lonely seagull in the foam
Henceforth upon the waves I wander.

"'My sin was great. I tempted God.
In daring youth I grew defiant;
Forbid, against the storm I rode
To wrestle with the angry giant.

"'In storm or calm, by star or cloud,
My boat and I must ride the billows,
While comrades round the hearthstone crowd,
And children nestle in their pillows.'

"It turned, that shadow thin and pale,
And floated outward from the ingle;
The wind sent forth a keener wail,
The loud surf groaned upon the shingle.

"In calm or storm, by star or cloud,
Doth Mary watch in gleam or glooming;
Each foam-wreath seems a glistening shroud,
Each shadow seems a dark prow looming.

"She weeps when tempests will not rest,
And wildly prays to gust and breaker.
'T will be a blessing doubly blest
When God, who pities her, will take her!"

"Of course," said the schoolmaster, "it's only a wild fancy. The storm isn't a Being with power to punish a poor soul like that. Mary lost her wits when he was drowned, and thought he came to her."

An old fisherman shook his head.

"They do travel," he said. "Many's a time I seen them between me and the white mist of the breakers."

"It's a dismal tale," said a sailor who had been far round the world and had come back to see his people. "There's many a brave fellow washed into Heaven by a big wave, an' him fightin' the storm. I'll sing you a song about a lifeboat, an' I can swear to the truth o' what happened."

"Aye! Give us the lifeboat!" said some who had already heard it, and some who had not.

"Here goes, then!" said the sailor, and rolled out the following in a deep bass voice, as if he was singing to be heard through the crash of a storm:

"Is it see the creatures perish, an' we not stir?
God! are we men? Here, boys, each an oar!"
Cries of 'stay' are drowned by the yell and roar
Of a maddened sea with the storm-fiends lashing her.

"Christmas Eve! O Heaven, the children! Wife!
'Whisht will ye! Steady! Off with her like a bird!'
The lifeboat's gone on the wave, and no more is heard
Of brave men's voices lost in the tempest's strife.

"Cloud and thunder ahead, and still that black
Spot in the heart of whirl that means the hope,
Lashed to a plank and clinging frail to a rope,
Of a perishing crew; 'On boys, no turning back!'

"Cloud and thunder ahead, and a wave that lifts
The boat on a wall of water; a moment there

It shudders, and drops in the pit like a gull in the air
Shot, and is hid 'neath the breakers' foaming drifts.

"Shouts from the shore: 'She'll right herself! who fears?
Sure the boys have their belts,' and straining eyes
That see not what they would see, despairing cries
Of women sent on the wind to unhearing ears.

"Bottom upwards the boat! O tale of shame!
Gallant fellows that sleep, not theirs to tell.
Harbour the widows and children, and toll the bell.
Lifeboat? God! 't was a death-trap. Who's to blame?"

"Who was to blame?" asked several voices.

"Oh, thim that ought to have kept the boat in workin' order whin she wasn't wanted, and didn't," said the sailor. "I seen the funerals of thim brave fellows that perished, nine o' them; and the crew of the vessel they lost their lives to try to save were saved without them, for the hulk of the wreck they were on, it kept itself afloat. But I sing that song wherever I go as a warnin' to thim that has charge of the lifeboats."

"Oh, but these are the cruel sad songs!" said a woman. "Mrs. O'Donovan, dear, will you bid somebody tell us a pleasant story for a change."

"Here's Kathleen with her head full o' them," said another. "Out with y', Kathleen, to the middle of the floor, an' tell us the little story all about Shán and the Princess Orlath."

Kathleen, a tall, fair-haired girl, took the place assigned to her with pride, and plunged into her narrative.

"There was once a King in Ireland, and he had a beautiful daughter, and the name that was on her was

Orlath. It means a golden lady. And there was a boy called Shán, and he had gold in his head, but——"

"None in his pocket," put in a man. "Musha, such talk about gold, an' who ever seen it?"

"The King's business was mostly cutting off the heads of fine young men that were not able to do the impossible tasks he set them to, an' they tryin' to earn his daughter. Shán thought he might as well be without his head as hungry, so he engaged to clean out the royal stables.

"As soon as he turned out one spadeful of rubbish, two or three more were flung in from he didn't know where. Princess Orlath brought him his breakfast, but he was so downhearted he would not eat.

"She coaxed him. 'Now, Shán,' says she, 'you may as well be beheaded with your breakfast as hungry.'

"She got him to eat, and while he was eating she worked for him.

"For every spadeful she threw out two or three were thrown out besides, for the fairies were working with her.

"When all was done, she took new pins out of her pocket an' strewed them about, and picked them up again clean, that the King, her father, might see the stable was as clean as he wanted it.

"The next morning Shán was put to fell trees. But, wirrasthru! for every tree that fell there was two or three trees sprang up.

"The Princess came out with his breakfast that day, too. She persuaded him to eat, and herself laid hold o' the hatchet. For every stroke she gave it was two or three trees came down on top of other.

"The third day Shán was ordered to build a summer

SHAN AND THE PRINCESS ORLATH

palace out on the river. He tried his best, but he only slipped down in the water, for nothing would stand on it.

"Orlath brought him his breakfast, but this time he wouldn't eat a morsel. He thought his death was certain.

"Then the Princess took a little bit of wood out of her pocket an' threw it on the water. And what do y' think, but it formed a fine avenue! She threw more sticks this way an' that way, and the palace began to appear; and at last it stood up grand and strong on the river. The birds from all parts came flyin' round it and above it, and each o' them dropped a feather till they put a roof on it.

"After that the King suspected that the Princess was helpin' Shán, and he made up his mind to kill him out of hand. But my brave Orlath was even with him, so that night she baked three little cakes, an' put one at the fire inside the fender, an' one on the stairs, an' the other she put in her bed.

"Her stepmother woke in the night and said to the King: 'Oh, I had a dream—such a dream! I dreamt that Shán and your daughter Orlath were miles an' miles away!'

"The King jumped up and cried out: 'Orlath, Orlath! Where are you, my daughter Orlath?' An' the cake at the fire answered: 'I'm here, Father, at the fire, warming myself.'

"They went to sleep again. But the stepmother wakened up a second time, and had the same cry, that she had dreamed Shán and the Princess were miles away.

"The King was cross, and shouted out again: "Orlath, Orlath, tell me this minute, where are you?'

"'Here, on the stairs, just goin' up to bed', answered the second little cake.

"Well, they slept again, and the third time they woke it was the same thing over an' over. 'Where are y', Orlath?' shouted the King.

"'In my bed, where I ought to be,' answered the little cake, pat.

"Then the King was mad, an' he swore that if his wife gave him another alarm he would behead her in the morning.

"When the morning came, and Shán and the Princess gone, there was a terrible rumpus, an' the whole Court set off on horseback after the runaways.

"'They're comin' on us fast,' said Shán, as they tore over the country on their jinnit. 'Hold me tight,' said Shán, 'an' don't be droppin' off to please them.'

"The Princess laughed an' just gave him a little bottle out of her pocket, and told him to throw it behind him as he was ridin' along.

"Musha! so he did. And where the little bottle fell a great river flowed out of it, an' while the pursuers were lookin' for a boat, Shán and the Princess escaped into his mother's kingdom, where they knew they were safe.

"They agreed that Shán ought to go on first to his mother's castle, to prepare her to give a proper welcome to the Princess Orlath. When they were saying good-bye she called after him:

"'Remember, you are to let no one kiss you, or you will be sure to forget all about me!'

"Then she climbed into a high poplar tree and hid herself. Under the poplar tree there was a deep well, and while the Princess was sittin' quiet there in the

branches a shoemaker's daughter came with her pitcher to draw water from the well.

"What did she see in the water but the reflection of a beautiful lady, an' thought it was herself!

"'To think of a beautiful crature like me stayin' here in this place, where there is no one to see me!' she cried out. An' she broke her pitcher on a stone, an' went out into the world to seek her fortune.

"When she didn't go home, the shoemaker's second daughter came to look for her sister. She saw the same beautiful lady lookin' back at her when she leaned over the water, an' she was as much delighted with herself as the other was. She took the same disgust to the back place, where there was nobody to admire her, an' broke the good vessel, an' away with her!

"At last the shoemaker's wife herself came scoldin' across the bog to look for the pair o' them. But when she seen herself in the well the vanity took her like a sickness, an' she threw her jug on the broken crockery an' set off into the world to get the admiration such a beautiful creature was born for.

"God help the poor shoemaker that was left lonesome! an' of course it wasn't long before he came lookin' for his family. As all the pitchers were broke, he brought the kettle, an' when he saw the lady's face he knew it couldn't be his own, him bein' a man, so he looked up into the tree, an' there was the Princess Orlath smilin' down at him.

"'Oh, then, come down, my girsha,' he says, 'an' don't miss the grand weddin' that's to be in the Queen's palace. That wanderin' son o' hers is come back,' says he, 'an' is to be married to the han'some lady his mother has chose for him,' says he.

"Then poor Orlath cried like the day's rain, that Shán had forgot her. An' a little robin pitied her, and sang to her off a twig, an' told her a secret.

"'Oh, Shán, Shán,' she was sighin', 'why did y' let them kiss you?'

"'He didn't,' piped the robin at her ear. 'It was the greyhound that lepp't up an' licked his lips, an' how could the poor boy help it?'

"That cheered her up a bit, an' she jumped down and away with her to the palace for a scullery maid, to help the cook that was makin' the feast for the wedding.

"'Give me a little bit of paste,' she says, 'for I have great notions of my own for makin' pretty pastry.'

"They gave her the paste, an' she made two pigeons, and got the servant that went in with the sweets to take them round on a silver tray to divert the company. There was grain spread on the tray, and the royalties laughed to see one of the pigeons peckin' it, an' the other wouldn't.

"'Why don't y' eat, dear?' says the cock pigeon to his companion. 'I can't eat,' says the little hen pigeon, sorrowful, 'because it's sore on my heart that the bridegroom at this weddin' has forgot his real love that was to have been his real bride.'

"When he heard the word, Shán's memory came back to him like a flash of lightnin', and he stood out in the middle of the floor and told his story to his mother and the whole company. And at the same minute the little hen pigeon turned into the Princess Orlath, and her all in white satin for her wedding; an' everybody, from the Queen down, was delighted with

her, an' the other bride was joyful too, for she had another prince she liked better than Shán, that was a stranger to her. An' so—

"They put on the kettle an' made tea,
An' if they didn't live happy how should we?"

CHAPTER XX

In Mildred's Old Frock

WHEN the people had dispersed, to return to their cabins on the bog and among the rocks, Lord Gytrash emerged from his corner and presented himself to Mildred, saying:

"I have taken a liberty, Mrs. O'Donovan, and enjoyed a treat. I have never come in contact with these poor people before, often as I have been in the country."

"I should have invited you, my lord, if I had thought you would have cared to come and join our humble circle," said Mildred with dignity.

"I really came to look for the Lady Honoria," he said, with one of his quizzical smiles. "But I do not see her."

Honoria came out of the inner room while he was speaking, and Mildred withdrew into the background.

The girl shrank for a moment, but quickly recovered her presence of mind. Her associations with Lord Gytrash were not pleasant ones.

"What is your lordship pleased to want with me?" she asked.

"I am astonished. You cannot be the little Lady Honoria!"

"In this house I am only Noreen."

"You are not the little girl who fought so hard for her title!"

"Not so little, yet remembering well how she was jeered and flouted, poor little wretch," said Honoria. "But that is all in the far past—though unforgotten."

"To me it is yesterday," said his lordship.

Honoria stood smiling at his perplexity.

"Are you disappointed at not finding the same poor little mortal to jeer at?" she said. "I am past feeling hurt at you now. I have learned the small worth of an empty title. I have lived with a courageous woman, and I know what true nobility is."

"I had no idea I had ever hurt you so deeply," said his lordship. "I remember seeing a good deal of fun in the fierce desire of a mite to have her dignity recognized. Since then I have understood that you were well cared for by Major Turbary's housekeeper. I had been thinking it might be almost time to send the child to school."

He looked so ludicrously bothered, and almost abashed, as he stood, hat in hand, looking at her with kind, admiring eyes, that Honoria laughed as he went on.

"Believe me, I did not come with an intention of jeering the little ladyship again, but only to show some kindness to a child whose father was my kinsman."

"Is—*not* was," said Honoria quickly.

"I will not gainsay you on that point. But may I ask how you have managed to grow out of that little girl into a woman?"

"Nature did it for me. I was ten when you thought me so small. I am now seventeen."

"So short an interval for such a miracle!" said his lordship. "And I have been several times about this place meanwhile, and have never seen you."

"When the Major had you he did not want me. Sometimes I contradicted him, and I won when we played at cards. But I was always glad to be in disgrace, and to get away to Mrs. O'Donovan."

"And what about schooling?"

"Mr. Ferrall and Mrs. O'Donovan have seen to that. I am afraid I shall never take a scholarship——"

"We don't want scholarships," said his lordship, and suddenly remembered the purpose that had brought him to the farm-house. "My reason for coming here was to invite you to the Castle to be introduced as your father's daughter to a lady of the family who is visiting Major Turbary."

Honoria coloured with surprise and pleasure.

"I don't know how that may be," she said. "The lady has been here, and I believe I offended her."

"Here? How?"

"The rain drove her in."

"I spoke to Lady Honoria as 'Noreen'," said Mrs. O'Donovan, "and Mrs. Turbary supposed her to be my daughter."

"You have played a mother's part to her," said Lord Gytrash. "You have been better to her than her own kinsfolk have been. What I wish now is to make two ladies of our family acquainted with each other."

"I can't see it," said Honoria.

"Will you not dine at the Castle some evening this week?"

"The Major has not invited me."

"I will make that all right. Say on Thursday. This is Tuesday. Mrs. Turbary shall get a surprise. She has been anxious to see you. We told her that you were on a visit to friends in the neighbourhood."

A shade crossed Honoria's face.

"It is not a trick to shame me—for amusement?"

"No, no, no! How could you think so?"

"Why should I not think so?" she cried.

"I see the little Lady Honoria is living still. Nothing is wanting but the stamp of the foot."

"Did I stamp my foot?"

"Oh, didn't you! Do I do not remember the little vixen! But you will come to dine at Glyn Castle on Thursday evening, Lady Honoria?"

"Well, then, I will," said the girl, throwing up her head, with a flash of the old pride in her eyes. "I will come in my working apron, and your lady of the family will be shocked, and the Major will order me out. And then I shall return here to my real friends."

"Good!" said his lordship. "All I ask is that you come."

After he had gone away, Honoria began to laugh.

"It will be a real case of Cinderella," she said, "only without the fairy!" Then she went on the floor, and clasped Mrs. O'Donovan round the knees, crying:

"Oh, Mildred, what do they mean by it? They don't want me. Why can't they leave me with you, who love me?"

"It is your duty to go, dear," said Mildred. "Lord Gytrash was in earnest. I could not keep you here when your relatives are seeking you. Be reasonable, and let us talk the matter over."

"I will be reasonable and matter-of-fact," replied the girl. "Am I a figure to keep this engagement, in my worn serge frock and my working apron?"

"I am thinking of whether I cannot manage to

provide a company frock for Cinderella," said Mildred. "I will think of it all night, and tell you about it in the morning."

The next day Mrs. O'Donovan opened a large chest which stood in her "Memory Chamber", in which she had laid away many a now useless article of her own, sent to her after the break-up of her old home and the scattering of her uncle's property. On the top of all in this long brown coffer, which stood against the wall and had not been opened for years, were some dainty girlish dresses, carefully wrapped in silver paper, and thus perfectly preserved from injury from the air and light.

These she now unpacked and drew forth, and spread before Honoria.

"One of these you might wear, dear," she said. "I was as young as you are when I wore them. We can make any alteration that is needed."

"Oh, Mildred!" cried Honoria. "Your young frocks! How lovely they are! Did girls really ever wear such beautiful garments?"

"They did, my dear, and so they do. And you shall wear them."

"They would never suit a country figure like me," said the girl. "I should look too ridiculous dressed up in that fashion."

"Then you must submit to be ridiculous," said Mildred; "which will you choose? I vote for this white. It was the frock I wore at my coming-out ball, three-and-twenty years ago."

The dress, spread out at its full length on chairs, was examined by Honoria with wonder and almost reverence. It was of white silk, veiled in transparent gauze,

and though time had given a suggestion of yellow to the white, yet the enriching tint seemed to be an improvement. When the dress was put on, Honoria had to take her friend's assurance that it was not unsuitable to her, for there were no long mirrors in Mildred's farmhouse.

Mrs. O'Donovan busied herself that day in making the frock more perfectly fitting to its wearer, and providing the little accompaniments necessary to such a dress. And while they sat stitching in the "Memory Chamber", Mildred talked of the past as she had never before talked to Honoria.

"It was my first ball dress," she said, "and in it I danced with your father, the Earl of Finbarr."

"Oh!" cried Honoria. "Why did you never tell me so before?"

"Did I not, dear? You knew that I had met him. How delighted I was with my partner! I thought I had never seen so noble a fellow. People were pitying him because he had grown up to be heir to nothing, and I thought it was horrid of them to think so much of property and money. It was just before he went away."

"Tell me more about him," said Honoria. "What was he like? What did he talk about?"

"He was as like you as a manly man can be like a girl," said Mildred; "and he had a note in his voice like yours, and I think his tone of mind was like your own too. While we were talking, my uncle came up and introduced to me the dreadful rich man he intended me to marry."

"And whom you ran away from," said Honoria.

"Thank God I did run away from him!" said

Mildred. "The woman he married ran away from him too. But that was sad, for it was after marriage. My running was in time to save me."

"You chose a good man and poverty," said Honoria.

"And never repented it."

"Would you have married my father?" asked Honoria suddenly.

"My dear, what a question! Why do you suppose such a thing?"

"Because I am sure he would have loved you," said Honoria.

"That would have been happy, but impossible," said Mildred.

"You might have been my real mother," said the girl thoughtfully, and went on with her sewing.

CHAPTER XXI

Her Ladyship Dines Out

HEBER had been away in Galway for two days, in search of some material for the work of his model of an airship, and he arrived home in time to see Honoria dressed for her adventure at the Castle.

His mother explained the circumstances to him before the girl descended from the "Memory Chamber" arrayed in her finery.

Heber stood silent under the shock. The thing he had feared had happened. The Lady Honoria's great relatives had claimed her, and Noreen was lost to him.

But Noreen came down the little narrow stair laughing, holding back her long white draperies, and looking like a cloud-angel come out of the sunset.

"They were to send for me," she said, "but I am not going to wait for the pumpkin coach. You will take me there, won't you, Heber?"

Of course he would, heavy-hearted as he was. The question arose of how to hold up the beautiful skirts and protect the dainty shoes from injury in the long walk. With great care these matters were arranged, and the young pair set out for the Castle, with plenty of talk by the way.

"You will never come back," said Heber.

"Oh, shan't I?" said Honoria. "I am going only for

a joke. I couldn't let them think I was afraid of them. And they don't want much more of me than I want of them. I will milk the cows to-morrow morning."

"You ought not. You must not," said Heber. "That is all over. You are the Lady Honoria Turbary in earnest now. You looked the character every inch when you came down the stair. They will see it, and they will keep you."

"Not when I want to fly. It does not take your airship to get from the Castle back to your mother. I am only performing a part in a play. You can't think how funny it is to me. How I shall enjoy telling you all about it to-morrow!"

Then they talked about the airship, and half-way they met a little trap coming with Mrs. Brennan in it as an escort and chaperon to the young lady. Honoria sent it back as it had come, and pursued her way with Heber.

"Dear, dear, my lady," said Mrs. Brennan, receiving her at the door, "his lordship would be so displeased if he knew of this!"

"Don't make me laugh too much, dear Mrs. Brennan," said Honoria. "Good night, Heber! I am to stay the night, you know, but I shall be home before cock-crow in the morning."

"You could have knocked me down with a feather when she threw off her cloak, and I seen the figure she was, with the white flowin' over her, and her own head like the sun above it," said Mrs. Brennan, when Kerrigan came down after announcing the young guest in the drawing-room.

"Whisht, woman! If y' had seen her entherin' the room to them you might speak."

"What happened?" asked the housekeeper eagerly.

"She just skipped up the stairs like a young kid, an' myself threw the door open as wide as it would go, and I shouted her name in my best pronunciation.

"'The Lady Honoria Turbary!' says I, and in she walked like a queen. And I stood a minute at the door to see how they would take it. You may talk about electric shocks, but a thunderclap is a fool to it. The Major stood up as if he was shot and would drop dead in a minute. His lordship stared and laughed, and Mr. Ferrall looked terrible surprised, and still all of a smile at her. But Mrs. Turbary——! Well, then, Mrs. Brennan, I haven't words for her. She was red an' she was green, and she frowned black, and then she smiled most sweet. It was his lordship that came forward and took her by the hand up to the Major, and says he:

"'Allow me to present to you our cousin, the Lady Honoria Turbary,' says he, an' then he took her to Madam Turbary and said the very same words. An' then her little ladyship dropped a curtsy to each of them. The like of it I never seen, an' where did she learn to do it at all, at all?"

"Comes natural to quality," said Mrs. Brennan. "Sure it's in her blood. And then——?"

"Then there was a little burst of high talkin'," said Kerrigan, "an' the first shock was over. And of course I couldn't stand there all night with the door in my hand, Mrs. Brennan, an' I had to come away. But I'll have more of it all at the dinner-time—see if I don't!"

Kerrigan's snapshot gave a fairly true glimpse of Honoria's entrance as a lady into the company of her kinsfolk. After the first moment Lord Gytrash saved the situation by his jocosity. He had not expected to see the radiant vision presented by the fresh young

creature dropped among them, and Honoria in her shabby serge frock would have been good enough for him. For the rest, men like those present seldom notice the detail of a woman's attire unless in a moment when it has to be paid for, and it would be taken as natural that her ladyship should appear dressed for dinner when she came in her own character to dine. But his lordship was particularly delighted to see the impression she was making on Mrs. Emmeline, and proceeded to improve on it, hoping that the coachman did not lose his way in the bog, nor the horses see anything uncanny to shy at.

Honoria fell in with his humour, and hinted at a thrilling incident on the imaginary drive of some ten or twelve miles which he had described to Mrs. Turbary.

"It was fortunate that the wheel did not altogether come off," she said demurely, with a mischievous glance at Lord Gytrash. "It would be an ill return to the 'good people', wouldn't it?"

Mrs. Emmeline was trying to learn from someone who these good people were, but no one seemed to think of enlightening her. The Major had not been informed of the projected visit of Honoria, and sat struggling vainly to connect this unexpected guest with the barefooted child who had come to him as a beggar, or the saucy little girl who used to play with him when he had the gout. Ferrall, after his first gleam of amusement, took the matter gravely, uneasy lest the adventure should result in some misfortune for his pupil.

With the move to the dining-room things seemed to become more natural. Mrs. Emmeline, who had felt congealed to ice, began to thaw a little after she had

eaten her soup and sipped her wine. An occasional grunt from the Major saved him from absolute silence. He knew that he had reason for displeasure, but did not quite know what the reason was, nor could he till he had time to think about it. One thing was certain, that rascally friend of his, Gytrash, had played him a trick, and pushed this girl into a position that did not belong to her. Could he even be sure that this young lady was the girl Honoria? It was a question to be asked, but he could not begin to make a row about it till to-morrow.

Meanwhile some lively and pleasant chatter was going on between Gytrash, Honoria, and Ferrall, and Mrs. Turbary was making heroic efforts to get a share in the conversation and make herself agreeable, all the time snatching back at guesses as to where the girl had come from. She had no idea that she had ever beheld Honoria before, having seen her imperfectly in the dusk of a rainy day in the farm-house, making bread, in her working frock and apron. Who could the people be who had sent their carriage and pair of horses so many miles across the country to convey her to the Major's dinner-table; and who was supplying her with extravagant dress if not these present relatives, she being the orphan daughter of a penniless father?

It was really in her effort to make herself important in the company by leading the conversation that she started the subject of the improvements contemplated on the Major's estate by the method of raising the rents, increasing the taxes, and, if necessary, by certain evictions.

"The notices are to be out to-morrow, are they

not, Major?" she said. "How will the people in your quarter take the matter, Mr. Ferrall?"

"I had not heard about it," said Ferrall.

"Nor I," said Gytrash.

"The cat will be let out of the bag to-morrow," said the Major.

Some more words flew about before Honoria caught the meaning of what was being said. At last she turned white, and left her fruit untouched on her plate. Kerrigan, who came in with the coffee, described what followed to Mrs. Brennan later on.

"She sat as quiet as a mouse, with her eyes burnin' in her head, listenin' to them talkin'. It was this one was to have the rent raised, an' that one, an' the other one. At last she turned her face full to the Major, an' she said, quite gentle like:

"'You couldn't mean,' says she, 'that you're goin' to afflict these poor people that work hard in England and Scotland,' says she, 'to earn the money for you that you couldn't get anywhere else?' says she.

"'I do mean, madam,' said the Major, 'to get my own that I have a right to. And if they don't like it they can go to England or Scotland, and stay there,' says he. 'I'm not goin' to give them my land any more for nothin',' says he.

"'An' what will you do with the land when the people are all gone?' asked her little ladyship, still quite quiet like, though her eyes was burnin'.

"'Plant trees,' says Mrs. Turbary off-hand, and as gay as you like, an' her looking sweet at the Major, an' hardly a glance at her ladyship.

"'Will trees pay better than men?' says our little lady, gaspin' as if she was suddent hit in the chest.

"'Certainly they will, in time,' says Mrs. Turbary, with one bad look shot out of her eyes at Lady Honoria, as if she would like to kill her.

"'In time? When we are all dead,' said her ladyship, looking at the Major, apast the wicked old woman, the same as if she didn't see her.

"'There's that Mrs. O'Donovan,' says Mrs. Turbary.

"'What about her?' says her ladyship.

"'The best farm on the estate,' says the Major. 'Growin' rich she is, an' payin' me a trifle,' says he. 'But out she'll go,' says he, 'if she doesn't look sharp,' says he; 'for I've raised her rent,' says he, 'an' she's able to pay it,' says he.

"'She is not able to pay it,' says her ladyship, and two red spots come out on her cheeks that had turned white. 'If you raise her rent she'll have to go,' says she.

"'Let her go,' says the Major. 'There's plenty will be glad to take her place.'

"Och, then our little lady stood up as straight as the mast of a ship, an' her eyes blazin' like a light-house.

"'You wicked old man!' she says. 'God will punish you. I'm sorry I ever ate the bread at your table,' says she. 'Why did y' ask me to come here?' says she.

"'I didn't ask y',' says he. 'Y' were put on me.'

"With that she turned her head and looked round the others at the table. His lordship and Mr. Ferrall were watchin' her breathless. An' the ould cat (it's cat she is) was smilin' an smilin', delighted, you could see, at the quarrel.

"The Lady Honoria just looked from one to another,

an' then she left her seat an' walked brave to the door.

"'I think it was for me to go first,' said Mrs. Turbary (an' it wasn't, for I know that much about the presidency myself). But herself is aiqual to anything. An of course it looked as if her ladyship was leadin' out the ladies, as the quality does when they leave the gentlemen behind to their wine. But that wasn't what our ladyship meant by it.

"'Kerrigan,' says she to me in the hall. 'Where's my cloak? I'm goin' home at once.'

"'If y' are, I'm goin' with y',' says I.

"'Do,' says she, 'for I'm that mad,' says she, 'that it's into the bog holes I'd walk an' never see them,' says she. 'An' that would be more trouble on Mrs. O'Donovan,' says she, 'an' enough comin' on her.'

"So I just looked in at you here, as y' know, Mrs. Brennan, an' told you to send Bridget or Norah if myself was wanted, an' away I went every step o' the way with her, and left her at home with her friends."

CHAPTER XXII

The Order to March

MILDRED was alone in the house when she heard a knock, and thought it was Heber. She was startled at seeing Honoria and Kerrigan.

"I thought you were to stay the night!" she said.

"I changed my mind. Good night, Kerrigan, and thank you."

"God bless you, Mrs. O'Donovan," said Kerrigan, "you're the best friend she has!" and he turned and went.

"My dear," said Mildred, "is anything the matter? What have they done to you?"

Honoria was standing in the firelight in the house-place, looking quite unlike the creature who had gone out of it a few hours before. The expression of her face frightened Mrs. O'Donovan. The beautiful dress was crushed and draggled. The skirts that had been so nicely cared for on the way to the Castle had been neglected on the road back again. Honoria had departed on her errand like an angel of light, but this was hardly the same who had returned.

"I will never go there again, Mother. Let me stay with you always, wherever you go," she said, and sat down on a stool and crouched over the fire.

"I'm not going anywhere, dear, and you shall stay with me if you like. But what has happened to spoil the visit, Honoria? Have you been too hot and hasty, darling? Tell me all about it."

Honoria could not tell her all about it that night. The worst would have to be known soon enough.

"The Major is cruel," she said, "even more cruel than I thought he was. Don't ask me to talk about it now. My thoughts will be clearer in the morning."

"Get to bed then, dear," said Mildred. "Heber will be coming in, and he will want to know. He went to see old Lacey, something about the materials for the gear. I won't tell him you have come back till the morning."

Honoria thought of how gaily she had assured him that she would milk the cows at cock-crow, as she stripped off her Cinderella finery and hid her misery in the darkness of her little chamber. How could she tell those friends who were so dear to her that it was decreed they were to be driven out of their home? She could not be the first to let them know of the impending calamity. At cock-crow she was sleeping, with tears on her face, after a weary night of sorrowful anxiety. Mildred allowed her to sleep on, and told Heber of her unexpected return, and the trouble that had evidently befallen her.

"They have treated her as they did before," said Heber, "making their cruel fun of her. Why did I let that man into the house? But there is a bright side to it, Mother. If she refuses ever to go back to them, she will belong to us. She is our Noreen all the more, if they insult and neglect her."

"I don't think Lord Gytrash meant anything but

what he said," replied Mildred. "If things have gone wrong it was not his doing."

"I don't believe in any of them," said Heber; and he threw on his cap and went down to the shore to look for Lacey, who was to meet him in his dry cave, to examine the new material for his tackle.

At dinner-time he returned with the bad news of the changes at hand in the country.

"Where's Noreen?" he said. "She heard it all last night. I met Kerrigan, and he told me."

Noreen appeared, looking pale and grave, but her passion was over. She had resolved to be a comfort to the afflicted, in so far as one powerless creature can be a power for consolation to a crowd of the equally powerless. She did not put it to herself in this way, but it was the meaning of her intention.

"A bigger tax for use of the seaweed and the turf," said Heber. "Think of Lacey paying it! Three of them earn in England what they are paying already. They have no way of getting more."

"What is the use of asking for it, then?" said Mildred.

"An excuse to turn them out," said Heber. "There is to be a clean sweep of all who do not pay."

"And when the country is clean swept, what then?" asked Mildred.

"They will plant trees," said Honoria.

"Does the Major think he will live to make money of forests that have yet to grow?" asked Mildred.

"He seems to think so," said Honoria, "or somebody has persuaded him. Mrs. Turbary says it will pay him in the long run."

"Mrs. Turbary is a greedy and ignorant woman," said Heber, "and the Major is an old fool. The scheme for

planting trees is an ultimatum, but the Major thinks he can get people to come over from England and pay him better rents. So Kerrigan tells me. The Major talks to Kerrigan, and Kerrigan hears, besides, many of the words of wisdom that fall from Mrs. Turbary at table. The real intention is to clear the human rubbish off the Turbary estate, and to replant it with prosperous English settlers."

Honoria gathered that Heber had heard nothing of the threatened eviction of his mother, and she felt it impossible to hint of her share in the general misfortune. The evil news would be sure to reach them soon. And so it did. While they were concerning themselves painfully with the piteous case of their poor neighbours, the blow descended on their own shoulders. By post the next morning the notice to pay increase of rent or give up the farm was in Mrs. O'Donovan's hands, direct from the Major's agent.

Mildred sat pale and silent with the letter on her knees.

"It can't be done," she said presently. Honoria took the paper from her and conned it up and down.

"It has been a struggle to pay and live," said Mildred. "We have worked hard. No one will be able to make more of it. The Major is making a mistake."

Heber had been out, visiting in the cabins, and condoling with the poor cabiners. Coming in, he saw at a glance what had happened. He threw the letter in the fire and laughed.

"I guessed we should get our share of the Major's attention," he said. "Never mind, Mother, we will leave him his place and go away where work is to be had. If I were in one of the big manufacturing towns in

England I could get plenty to do until I have perfected my invention. And then——"

Mildred shook her head. She saw difficulties that looked like impossibilities. But Heber went on:

"Noreen will come with us, and it will be a splendid move into a bigger world. I tell you, Mother, I have been feeling for a long time that I could never work out what is in me if I remained always here among the dear old rocks and bogs and mountains. I have often said so to Mr. Ferrall, but he always urged on me, 'Your time has not yet come'. Well, then, it has come now. It is Providence that has sent us this notice to quit."

Honoria's face lit up, as she listened to him, but Mildred wept.

"My boy, you don't know what you are saying. It's a hard world, and a new start anywhere cannot be made without money," she said. "You might go away and struggle and push for yourself, but to be burthened with two women at the outset—you could not do it."

The new light in Honoria's face went out of it. Heber gone, what would life be without his presence? Only a moment, and her eyes were shining again.

"I can get work to do too," she said. "I could teach little children. I could learn to be a cook or a housemaid."

"No," said Heber, "I intend to provide for all."

"You brave, foolish boy!" said Mildred, smiling through her tears.

"Neither so brave nor so foolish," said Heber. "I am only proposing to play the part of a man."

"I am my own mistress," said Honoria, "and I have a right to work if I please. Between us, I think, we can manage to take care of you, Mother."

"If I could only hold on here till you could get launched in the world, Heber! You must consult Mr. Ferrall."

"I will go and talk to him," said Heber, and went off at once.

"Could you possibly hold on, Mother dear?" asked Honoria when he was gone.

"I fear," said Mildred. "The rent has been raised again and again, and I have known that to pay a further increase would be impossible. I have sold many little things that were of value to me in order to pay more than the little place would produce. I always hoped to remain here till Heber might be fitted to go out into the world and do something for himself. You know how frugally we have lived."

"I will ask Lord Gytrash to get me a situation of some kind," said Honoria. "He did not join in the cruel talk at the table. I could send you money to help to pay the rent, and Heber would be free to go his own way unencumbered. Afterwards, he would have power to be good to you. When he perfects his machine——"

"My dear, I have not all the faith in that machine that you have. I am not young enough to be so sanguine, though I am not too old to sympathize with your enthusiasm. My boy has a wonderful talent for mechanics—Mr. Ferrall assures me that he has; but a great deal of training would be necessary to enable him to make the best of his natural gifts. If I could have sent him away to get that training, how gladly I would have seen him go, even though he should have taken all the joy of my life away with him. But it was not to be thought of. It could not be done."

"He will have to go now," said Honoria, "and if his mother and sister could make a home somewhere near him all would be well. Dear Mother, could you and I not keep a little school for children, not very far from Heber's workshop, wherever that might be? Mr. Ferrall has friends in England, and perhaps he would write to them and introduce us."

"Perhaps, and perhaps," said Mildred; but the girl's strong words and bright face, so full of faith and hope, had their effect in cheering her. When Heber came back he found them sitting at the fire, full of courage, constructing plans and making reckonings and guesses about ways and means.

"Ferrall is disgusted at the Major, but he says it will be all right," said Heber. "It will have to be a move for us, of course, but I think he can help me to something in England. So cheer up, Mother, and it will be all for the best. It will be only to say good-bye to the old place."

But that "only" had a keen knife edge to make wounds in poor Mildred's heart. The little home, with the great ocean beside her and the solemn mountains looking at her, both aware of the sorrows and the sacred consolations of her life, had grown so dear that its shelter could not be forsaken without cruel bleeding of the roots that had grown to its foundations.

While Mildred grieved, the young ones were stirred to quicker life, partly by indignation, but as much by the vague hope of youth, which out of the most colourless materials can create the most splendid possibilities. For Heber the notice to quit would be as the soldier's order to march; and Honoria was seeing, through an opening of helpfulness to those she loved, illimitable worlds to be conquered.

CHAPTER XXIII

"The Arrogant Lady Honoria"

MRS. TURBARY'S feelings with regard to Honoria's visit to the Castle can only be described by herself, as set down in a letter to her friend in India.

"My dear Carrie," she wrote, "I have at last been allowed to meet my young relative, Lady Honoria Turbary. You know I told you that I doubted of her existence, seeing that she did not appear, and that I could not discover in the neighbourhood any persons of position who could have her on a visit. However, there she is, or was, the other evening, arriving to dinner a perfect vision of beauty and elegance, I must say that for her! Her friends, whoever they are, sent her over (I heard something about twelve miles of a drive, but they don't answer my questions when I ask them direct about particulars) in their carriage and pair, which evidently waited, and was ready to take her back when she flashed out of the dining-room, after making such a scene as I can hardly describe to you.

"You will scarcely believe that this girl, who appears to be quite dependent on her relative the Major (though how she will ever get him to pay for her expensive frocks I can't imagine; the gown she had on must have cost a pretty penny!), became quite furious at the idea of his estate being improved by a judicious rearrangement

of his rent roll and a proper effort to induce English settlers to reside on the property.

"A mention of the proceedings which have been in the hands of the agent for some time was made at dinner, and my lady flew into a passion and denounced the Major at his own table, called him a wicked old man, asked him why he had invited her there, and said she was sorry she had ever eaten his bread. I am glad to say the Major was equal to the occasion. I could see from the first that she was no favourite of his, and that nothing but a sense of his duty towards me would have induced him to invite her to our dinner party. I could perceive, too, that she was never welcome to him, from words that he uttered when she was denouncing him.

"'I did not ask you,' he said. 'You were put upon me!'

"Of course he spoke under extraordinary provocation, but I think he betrayed his real feeling towards her, and the light in which he regards her. There was some satisfaction in discovering this, but I have never been able, since, to draw him out further on the subject, as he growls and grows silent and sulky whenever I approach it.

"But if the Major is satisfactory, I can't say the same of my cousin Jim. You know already that Mr. Ferrall is unsympathetic, and I was not surprised when he took the girl's part after she was gone, and reproached the Major with planning certain changes on his estate which he was incapable of carrying through. Why, I wonder, incapable? Is he so weak in character? I don't think so; but, if he is, I am at hand to encourage and support him. Ferrall annoyed but did not daunt me. I confess,

however, that when Gytrash turned on us, and defended my Lady Honoria's views, I felt angry and disgusted. It realized the instinctive fear I expressed to you before I ever saw the young person, a fear lest, in case of her proving good-looking and attractive, she should cast an unnatural spell upon him. Oh, why did I desert him in early days, and leave him to fall a victim, in his mature, not to say elderly years, to the ambitious designs of a minx who is young enough to be his daughter! You cannot imagine, dear Carrie, how my conscience reproaches me. But there! the past cannot be mended, and there is now only the future to be interfered with.

"Whatever may have been his reason Gytrash certainly lectured the Major on the wrongfulness of his proposed righting of his affairs; and as Jim is not Irish himself, and knows very little about the tenants, I can guess at no motive for his attitude in this matter except it be an abject desire to please the Lady Honoria. You need not tell me that this is a baseless jealousy ('base and baseless,' I think you said in your last letter); I have a belief in presentiments, and I think I shall prove to you before long that in this case at least the presentiment has come true.

"Well, there was quite a grand row at the table (fortunately we had enjoyed our very excellent dinner before it began), and although Jim's habit of jibing and jeering often gave things a ridiculous turn, and prevented anything like blows between the combatants, still it was sufficiently unpleasant, and we all went to bed cross and miserable. As I lay awake reviewing the whole situation I certainly felt it a bitter spite of fate that a baggage with nothing belonging to her but the family name and an absurd title should get in among us, and have power

to set us all by the ears, and to overturn all our prudent arrangements. Not that I care so very much about the Major's improvements (though it might be made a nice little property for my boy to inherit), but because, you see, I have taken up a certain position with my cousin Turbary which I never dreamed would place me in antagonism with my cousin Gytrash. I cannot all at once turn round and go over to Jim, and if I did he would laugh at me, and would not believe in me.

"So there you have the state of my mind as I lay awake that night, and felt that I had got into a mess and did not know how to get out of it. Fortune, however, is a goddess with two faces, and on this occasion she appears to be about to turn her smiles in my direction.

"When morning came I put on my most conciliating looks and stepped out-of-doors to look about for my cousin Gytrash, who is an early bird, the Major being nothing of the kind, and usually keeping us late at breakfast. I found Jim reading a telegram which had just arrived (a shocking place this is for expensive porterage), and which was evidently causing him extreme disturbance.

"It proved that the wire informed him of the serious illness of a dear old friend in Yorkshire, and urged him to come home at once. He was so much put out about the illness that I felt curious to know who the friend could be, and learned that it was only a very old lady who had been greatly attached to his mother. I had no idea that Gytrash could have been so sentimental But so it seemed to be. He appeared to have forgotten everything but his anxiety to get back to Yorkshire. He was finishing a hasty breakfast when the Major

appeared, and a trap was at the door to take him to the nearest railway.

"I quite believe that the Major was as much relieved as I was myself when our cousin was driven off. You will ask, perhaps, why we were so glad to get rid of him; but if you think of it you will soon perceive the cause of our rejoicing. We have both (the Major and I) our reasons for wishing to be friends with our cousin Gytrash, and for disliking anything approaching to a serious quarrel with him. We did not acknowledge this to each other, I need not say.

"I spent that day in trying to discover how soon the Major's changes on the property could be effected, hoping that his plans might be accomplished before Jim's return.

"The latter could then reproach the Major as much as he pleased, and once the thing was done I could persuade him that it had been done in the end against my wishes. 'Having reflected on your arguments,' I should say to him, 'I recognized their justice, and did my best to restrain our dear, obstinate Major.' Now, don't laugh at me, Carrie, or call me a manœuvrer. A little diplomacy is necessary for getting on in this world, let me beg to remind you.

"But my triumph is to come. You need not suppose that I am so heartless as to be glad that an accident has happened to my dear cousin Gytrash, who is indeed the person dearest and most interesting to me in the world. He will be none the worse of it, though it keeps him where he is for the present. As his old lady was better by the end of the week, he might have been back here with us in time for the evictions, and there might have been a desperate to-do. But fortune interfered.

He was stepping out of the train without observing that he was in a high carriage above a low piece of platform, and he fell, dislocating (or something) his shoulder. People have been killed by this treacherous arrangement of railway companies, but whatever Jim's injury may be, it is not fatal. It only detains him a prisoner on the other side of the water, and we can proceed as we please here before he arrives on the scene to annoy us.

"You must see that there are two satisfactory points about his present situation. He is removed alike from the sphere of the Major's prudent action and from the dangerous influence of the arrogant Lady Honoria."

The rest of Mrs. Turbary's letter was chiefly concerned with her displeasure at certain doings and affairs of her son Rolf, who, she perceived, must be allowed to mature, and develop some common sense, before she could venture to introduce him to the powerful relatives whose goodwill she was so earnestly trying to enlist in his favour. If these two men were to be expected to make "a mutual son and heir of him" he must learn how to assume more manliness.

And then she deplored the dullness of Ireland, especially of Connaught, and most especially of the Turbary estate and Glyn Castle; and ended by promising her friend another letter with further news as soon as there might be anything to communicate.

Having thus delivered herself of her genuine feelings, Emmeline next applied her wits to conforming her opinions as nearly as possible to those expressed by Lord Gytrash on the subject of the Major's proposed new dealings with his tenants, and to betraying them artlessly in her letters to her dear cousin Jim,

"who must be so sadly in need of sympathy in his painful confinement".

"I had no idea," she wrote, "that these poor people were so poor or so worthy as you and Mr. Ferrall have described them. Naturally I have sympathized with our dear Major's wish to better his own circumstances, but of course it ought not to be done at the expense of what you look on as cruelty. I quite agree that the admirable Mrs. O'Donovan ought not to be disturbed from her home, and that she is not to be blamed for her daughter's impertinence. By the way, I have never been allowed to know the name and abode of our cousin the Lady Honoria's present entertainers. I should like to pay her and them a visit, but I should not of course make any allusion to her strange conduct at the Major's table. I have ascribed it in my own mind to the over-excitement of a person of ardent temperament and nervous organization, who has been rather spoiled by more attention from indulgent relatives than her position would entitle her to."

Emmeline scanned this passage of her letter anxiously, fearing that even so much implied reproach of his favourite might be displeasing to her correspondent, and that such displeasure might react on herself. She could not, however, let the letter go without some little asperity in her remarks on the Lady Honoria; and she tried to make amends for it by allusions to the girl's beauty, and especially to the elegance of her dress, which bore testimony to the Major's generosity, unfortunately forgotten by her ladyship in the heat of her quarrel with her benefactor.

CHAPTER XXIV

"A Dream that may Come True"

KERRIGAN'S wrath and distress at the threatened calamity of evictions found no adequate relief in outpourings to Mrs. Brennan in the housekeeper's room, and he presented himself at Mr. Ferrall's door, begging pardon for intruding on a gentleman, but "being that heartsore that he hadn't the same feeling about taking a liberty".

"You're welcome, Kerrigan," said Mr. Ferrall. "I'm feeling as bad about it myself. But don't make up your mind to the worst just yet. We don't know what may happen to prevent this business."

"I wouldn't be too downhearted neither, sir," said Kerrigan, "if it wasn't that the Major has the obstinatecy in him natural; and the obstinatecy itself mightn't ha' come to the fore only for madam that's there, eggin' him on to it. It's her that has put it in his head about English people comin' over to make more out of the land, an' give him bigger rents."

"Are you sure of that?" said Ferrall. "Lord Gytrash informs me that Mrs. Turbary is writing to him, telling him that she hopes to prevent the Major from carrying out his intentions."

"Oh, don't I know she's writin' to him," said Kerrigan, "writin' one thing to him, an' sayin' another to

the Major. Don't I know her as well as if she was printed before me in a book? Sometimes she forgets I'm in the room, an' sometimes she doesn't; but whatever way it is I see what she's at. Sure the very step of her walkin' across the floor has the cat's paw in it afther a mouse!"

"I am afraid you forget yourself, Kerrigan, talking disrespectfully about a lady."

"Lady or no lady, I never could abide a woman o' that composition," said Kerrigan. "I wasn't born yesterday, Mr. Ferrall, and I didn't live all my life in Connaught. An' as for forgettin' myself—if I do, I don't forget the poor cratures that have desolation hangin' over their heads, an' the Major himself one o' them that'll be ruinated, as I firmly believe will be the upshot of it. For where has madam got English farmers in her pocket to be fallin' in love with Connaught, an' comin' over to go up to their necks in the tide to manure the rocks, an' pay him as much money for the turf in the bog (that's nothin' but slush if they didn't cut it and dhry it) as would carry them coals in a hooker from Galway? If she thinks they would come she's a fool, an' it's no fool at all she is, but a fox!"

"I don't see her motive for ruining Major Turbary," said Ferrall, "so we'll suspend judgment till we see how things turn out."

"Then there's the little ladyship," said Kerrigan, who felt that he had not been allowed to deliver himself of half his grievances. "Tall she has grown, but little we always think of her, rememberin' the day she sat down in the middle of us in the servants' hall, and hung her head because her father's relations were disownin' her. An' what's to become of her now, I'll ask you, Mr. Fer-

rall, when the only protector she has, an' that's Mrs. O'Donovan, is turned out of house an' home, an' the Lady Honoria Turbary along with her?"

"It hasn't happened yet," said Ferrall; "and if it should, why, Lord Gytrash is her father's cousin as well as the Major."

"His lordship is a pleasant man, Mr. Ferrall, an' he has a laughy way with him, an' he's here an' he's there. He has the little ladyship up to the Castle for dinner, an' then in the thick o' the storm off with him to England and breaks his leg, or somethin' o' that kind, that lays him up an' keeps him safe out o' the trouble that's comin' on her."

"Is that the way you look at it?" said Ferrall. "Well, Kerrigan, if they all turn out demons, you and I must try to come to the rescue."

"You'll do what you can, Mr. Ferrall; that I'm sure of, or I wouldn't be comin' here to talk to you. But you're not her own flesh and blood, an' maybe you're a poor man, though a rale gentleman along with it, not like me that has only the heart, an' neither the money nor the manners."

"You set too much store on money, Kerrigan. Your little lady might be the happier for going through the world poor and hard-working. And she has some idea of it herself. She has been talking to me about it, and whether the eviction takes place or not, I think she will want to go away into the big world, and get something to do in it."

"Oh, then, Mr. Ferrall, what could the like of her do, an' her that was born a noble lady?"

"That she is, I believe, Kerrigan; but all the noble ladies in the world have not got titles. It's sometimes

the other way about. There is nobility that has nothing to do with aristocracy, and there's aristocracy that has nothing to do with nobility."

"I see what y' mean well enough, Mr. Ferrall. I didn't come through the world without havin' my own notions about that. But what I will stick to is that our little Lady Honoria has got the nobility in her right hand and the aristocracy in her left hand, an' the like o' her oughtn't to be knockin' about the universe without a rest for the sole of her foot. An' what would you like to be puttin' her at, Mr. Ferrall? Is it standin' behind a counter in a shop, or whackin' the banisters wid a sweepin' brush, like Norah or Bridget? Or is it a cook she's to be, or a housekeeper to a gentleman, like Mrs. Brennan?"

"My good old friend, I did not mean to make you so angry," said Ferrall. "My own feelings in this matter are exactly like your own. But it is too soon to make arrangements for the future. Providence is going to look after your little Lady Honoria."

"It's true for you," said Kerrigan, "but I wouldn't be for leavin' her to Providence. It's the good God will take care of her anyhow, Mr. Ferrall. An' as it's time for me to be goin' now, it's my duty to wish you good evenin', sir."

At this time it seemed that Ferrall was the only refuge and counsellor of the anxious and distressed. Honoria had sought his advice and informed him of her desires, and now Heber walked into the little library that had so long been the lad's schoolroom, and asked him to give a hearing to his old pupil's statement of a difficult case.

"I've quite made up my mind that it's time for me to flit," he said. "I want to be in some kind of a workshop

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KERRIGAN EXPRESSES HIS OPINIONS

where I can see what other men are doing, and learn how to perfect my own work. I would rather I had been able to finish before starting——"

He stopped, seeing a twinkle in his friend's eye.

"You would like to fly across channel?" said Mr. Ferrall; "take the world by surprise, while the slow coaches are still hesitating?"

Heber laughed. "Truth to say, I should," he said; "but short of that, I wanted to get on a little farther before discovering my plan to anyone. Noreen and I have the secret between us, up to this."

"Does she still intend to fly with you in search of her father?" asked Ferrall.

"Something like that is at the back of her mind, sir," said Heber; "at the back of both our minds. But of course we are wiser about it than we used to be. We know the difficulties——"

"And the dangers. But you are still in the dream?"

"It's a dream that may come true, Mr. Ferrall. Andrée thought he could do it in his balloon—cross from his point in Spitzbergen to the Pole in an hour. What one man dreams of another man realizes. I was a very small boy when Andrée gave his life—and failed. I've grown up feeling sure that only for something not quite understood he would have succeeded. Balloons won't do it, and there is now a question of wings. Why do the birds not turn somersaults in the air and tumble into the sea? When we have answered that question we may fly where we please."

"Do we know all the mishaps to which bird kind is liable?" asked Ferrall. "Until every gull and penguin is labelled and reports himself, I don't see how we can reckon the number that may perish in the upper air,

stricken by storms, or drop into the ocean through mere wing weariness. And granted that they always ride the whirlwind and skim the breakers securely, do you mean that they have told you their secret, and you expect to take the prize from all the laborious and sanguine aviators who are your rivals all over the world?"

"I think I shall construct a better pair of wings than any that have yet soared," said Heber; "but I know my needs, and that I must get into a proper workshop. This present crisis seems to decide me on pushing with both elbows to get into one as soon as possible. My mother will sell everything she has to realize a little money to take us to England. I shall carry my model with me. In some of their engineering places over there I shall be certain of work enough to get us bread, until——"

"The moment of triumph. Well, my boy, I am not going to say anything to daunt you. I have heard that confidence in one's own powers is one of the signs of genius. Somebody with genius will learn the secret of the bird some day, and why not you? It will be hard on your mother to take her feet off the ground she has trod so long, and cast herself on your wing. As for Honoria, I find she is as keen for the flight as yourself. I sympathize with you all. Is there anyone to sympathize with me, I wonder, when I shall be left looking at your derelict house, or at the fat English farmer whom Mrs. Turbary is to send over to us?"

"I think you ought to leave the place yourself and come with us, Mr. Ferrall. I suppose you can live where you like, and these miles of shore will be a cold place when the people are out of them."

"It might happen," said Ferrall, "though I've grown to love my little seabird's nest. If the Major does this

thing I don't see myself sitting at his table again. And I'll miss my pupils. You and Noreen have grown to be like a son and daughter to me."

"What should we have been without you, sir? What a joy it would be to us if you would come to England too, and be near us! It wouldn't be so much like exile to my mother if you were anywhere within reach. Of course, we shall be poor working people for a while, at any rate; but you never looked down on us here, and you wouldn't look down on us there——"

"It's up I should have to look," said Ferrall, "when you spread those wings of yours." And so this conversation ended with a laugh, though the hearts of both the talkers were strained with the pathos of the situation, and their minds disturbed with anxiety as to events that were looming near, with direful consequences to a number of their helpless fellow-creatures.

When Heber left his friend and master he went to look for Honoria in the Laceys' cabin, and they walked home together, discussing their future movements as though they were really sister and brother, the children of one father and mother.

CHAPTER XXV

Tribulation

SUMMER was on the wane, an early autumn set in with heavy rains and rough winds, and the foreshore of Connaught, notably the Turbary estate, was in a hurly-burly of calamitous weather. Nature was mingling her tears with the tears of those who had so long struggled to live on her scanty bounty among the rocks and bogs, all she had left for them, having squandered her best substance on other and generally less deserving children.

The mountain torrents roared and cast themselves down into the plains, flooding the bogs; and the sea covered the cliffs and headlands with sheets of foam, ocean waves from Newfoundland bellowing their news of horrors they had seen by the way, and hurling landward wreckage of the ruin they had wrought as they retreated panting to do yet more dreadful mischief.

Emmeline began to ask herself why she had ever come to Connaught. The place was dreary. Beautiful as the country was in the fine-weather season, it was hideous now to one who required comfortable and attractive surroundings. Everyone in the Castle seemed wrapped in the sulks. The Major was bent on following the course she had advised, but his determination seemed to make him ill-humoured and unhappy. The servants went about like mutes at a funeral. The sky

was invisible, and the Castle seemed built round with a wall of rain. Disagreeable as Mr. Ferrall was, he had been somebody to come in at the door and make a sound in the hall, and play a game of cards or chess, and force the Major to speak, if only to grumble or scold about something. And of course Mr. Ferrall could not come now. A walk above the cliffs would mean being carried out to sea. There had been no more news of Lady Honoria Turbary. Whoever her friends and entertainers might be, they were evidently in no hurry to part with her.

As for Gytrash, he was still detained in England, and his absence made things more deplorable in daily life, even though his presence could not be desired until the proceedings on the estate, now fixed for an approaching day, should be safely and irrevocably got over.

As the events so dreaded in the neighbourhood were drawing near, Emmeline became subject to attacks of wishing that she had never had anything to do with them, had never come to that country, had stayed in England. But then——? The attack usually worked off in a number of questions of policy, impossible to be answered. The high temperature of doubt and discontent fell, and Emmeline was once more in her normal condition of faith in her own foresight and management.

Her only consolation was in keeping a diary for the information of her friend in India.

"1st October.—The rain is still falling in sheets" (said the diary). "Nothing visible from the windows. Wind roaring like a hundred thousand bulls. The Major as cross as a bear. Have I lost my charm for him, or is it only a passing cloud? When these impending affairs

are over he will probably become more impressionable to pleasing influences. The eviction of Mrs. O'Donovan is fixed for Tuesday week. She appears to be a very respectable and well-to-do person, and deserves to be disturbed since she refuses to pay the very reasonable increase of rent. Other evictions are to follow.

"5th October.—I feel quite sure that, when all this business is over, Gytrash will step in to help to send English farmers over to improve this property by paying proper rents. Once the thing is done, he will see the benefit of the change. I should be uneasy about the tediousness of his convalescence if I were not so satisfied with the mere fact that he cannot come here to embarrass us just at present.

"6th October.—The rain is over, and the Major and I have been walking out for a little air. The country has a most extraordinary appearance. There is scarcely a dry spot for one's feet. Nothing is dry but the rocks. We did not meet a human being. To-morrow the evictions begin. I am curious to see the proceedings. The Major is as sullen as ever, and does not speak of what is about to happen."

Here Mrs. Turbary stopped and put her manuscript in her blotter, intending to continue the record next evening, adding items of extraordinary interest.

As she had hoped, the morning gave promise of a fine day, suitable for the enjoyment of an out-of-door entertainment. Preparations had been made by Mrs. O'Donovan for a peaceful yielding up of her house and farm. But she had resolved to oblige the authorities to evict her, as a protest against the injustice done to herself and the wrong about to be done to her poorer neighbours. She would allow them to come into her

house, to quench the fire on her hearth, and to demand the key of her door and order her to walk out across the threshold and return no more.

She and Honoria had been up early, making the last preparations for departure. Mr. Ferrall had insisted on carrying off and giving storage in his house to the few cherished possessions in the "Memory Chamber", which, though of little intrinsic value, were yet sacredly dear to their owner. For the rest, it was the duty of the police to empty the house of its contents and place them outside of the walls.

At an early hour the evictors arrived, about a hundred men on cars drawn up on the road at some distance from the farm-house, a number of police with their officers, and a number of soldiers also accompanied by their officers, the latter remaining seated on the cars smoking their cigars, and comfortably wrapped in their cloaks, for the rain was again falling, and a bitterly cold wind began to blow.

About the time that the police began their operations within the house the Major and Mrs. Turbary left the Castle to be present at the eviction. Emmeline was moved by curiosity to witness an unusual sight, and the Major was moved by Emmeline. Had she not been there to urge and persuade him to show by his presence that he was doing what he knew to be his duty, the Major would have avoided the scene; but then, if she had not been there he would probably never have entered on his present course of action. As it was, he went reluctantly, in sullen and angry mood, and made little response to her praises of his courage and perseverance in a righteous cause, or her remarks upon the bad taste of a respectable woman like Mrs.

O'Donovan, in allowing herself to be turned out of her place in this humiliating manner, rather than pay the just debt that she owed to her landlord.

"And I hear that she is actually remaining there on the spot to see the thing done, instead of departing quietly, and leaving you your lawful property without giving you all this trouble."

The Major's reply, if he made one, was lost in a peculiar sound that came to their ears as the wind suddenly rose, and heavy rain began to lash the wayfarers.

They were on the road that crossed the bog about a mile and a half from the Castle, and a quarter of a mile from O'Donovan's farm. The rain and the wind were unpleasantly unexpected, but the noise that confused and bewildered them was not caused by either, and was not coming from the heavens, nor from the sea. It had in it a terrible suggestion of upheaval, of the resurrection of many waters long buried in the recesses of the earth, and suddenly alive and actively malignant.

Amazed and appalled at the uproar, the Major and Mrs. Turbary stood on the narrow path as if paralysed, Emmeline clinging wildly to the old man as her natural protector.

"Is it an earthquake?" she moaned at last, in abject terror.

"It is a bog slide," said the Major. "I don't know from which side it is coming, or where we can run so as not to meet it."

Emmeline wailed, and looked frantically around her. The word bog slide conveyed no information to her. She only saw that Nature had risen up in evil mood, and that the solid earth had dissolved and was threatening to destroy her.

Oh, for a tree to climb, or a ladder of escape to the heavens! There she was in the middle of the wide stretch of bog, and the mysterious, bellowing monster was almost upon her.

A few minutes more and the two unlucky wayfarers must be overwhelmed. The bog, like a raving ocean, was rushing towards them, carrying with it wreckage of walls, roofs of thatch, trunks of trees, and uprooted bushes.

While he stood within a few yards of destruction, the Major's old soldierly courage came to his aid, and with it the presence of mind that was their only chance of salvation.

"Run!" cried the Major. "You see the crowd over yonder on the road. The bog is flowing so that it may spare that bit of road. It will reach this path in a few minutes."

Emmeline answered him with groans and screams.

"Run!" he shouted; "you are nimbler than I am. You may have a chance of escape, though I have none."

Then Emmeline realized the situation, and began to run towards the farm, leaving the Major on the bog path; while the old man, mindful of his years and his gouty joints, plodded resolutely forward, though aware that his escape to that safe spot in the distance was impossible.

"God forgive me my unkindness to the poor!" said a voice in his heart. Perhaps he scarcely heard it. His business of the moment was to die like a soldier.

Emmeline's speed in running was such as would have been impossible to her had the matter not been one of life or death. As the Major had perceived, the bog was surging on its way across the path, and

had not spread to the road where the cars were drawn up in front of Mrs. O'Donovan's house. By wonderful efforts Mrs. Turbary reached a high ground that gave on the road, and attained a place of safety.

Never looking back, she sped on towards the cars on the road. One of them came driving to meet her, and the military officers seated on it sprang off and placed her on the vehicle in a fainting condition. All was in confusion on the road and about the farm. Nature had taken wreck and ruin into her own powerful hands, and the evictors stood in consternation to see the fragments of the dwellings they were to have desolated moving past them on the torrent.

The work of the day, which had only begun, had been suddenly arrested. An amazing interruption had occurred. All eyes were turned on the rushing, wreck-laden mass of the bog, and all efforts would now have to be directed towards the saving of life, and the rescuing, if possible, of threatened property.

It was only when Emmeline had been restored to consciousness, and revived with brandy, that general attention was focused on the question of what had become of the Major.

That he had been with her crossing the bog, and that she had left him behind her there, was all that she could tell about the matter. While adventurous men went in search of him, she clung to the military, and implored them to take her to Galway on their car. She would not stay in this terrible country one other night. No, she would not enter Mrs. O'Donovan's door. It seemed to her that this woman and her farm were accountable for these disasters. As for returning to the Castle, there was no way, and it looked in the dis-

tance like a bleak pile of grey rocks in the midst of a horrible ocean.

The officers pitied her terror and distress, and promised to take her to Galway on their return there, provided the road proved passable. Meanwhile she sat on the roadside, and was not too proud to accept Mrs. O'Donovan's warmest cloak, and to partake of various refreshments from her hands during the course of the day. The rain had ceased, and the skies were once more blue, but the mysterious moving horror of the destroying morass continued its devastating march.

By nightfall the moon rose in splendour above the melancholy scene, and there was no slackening of the efforts of the searchers who risked their own lives exploring the dreary wilderness that was yesterday the best-paying portion of Major Turbary's territory.

CHAPTER XXVI

The Evictor Evicted

WONDERFUL changes had taken place since morning. The evictors were gone, carrying Mrs. Turbary with them; search parties were still out, seeking the Major; the fire on Mrs. O'Donovan's hearth was burning again, and ready hands had carried back the furniture and household goods, and restored them to their places. The turbulent sea of the bog looked dangerously near the door, but the house stood high and dry, the waters sweeping past it above the shore and away towards the boggy inland.

"It's the hand of God," said Kerrigan.

He had made his way by a circuitous and dangerous route from the Castle, had been out with the searchers, looking for his old master, and had arrived drenched with water, bedaubed with bog-stuff, and distraught in countenance, at the farm-house.

"They've found the Major," he said. "There's a good spot in him, and God wouldn't let him die in his sins. They're bringin' him here, stretched on an old door that was floatin' not too far from him where he was lyin' on the high stones, with somethin' broke inside of him. There's no place to bring him to but here, Mrs. O'Donovan. Yourself won't refuse to take him in."

"Am I a Christian?" said Mrs. O'Donovan.

"Sure y' are that same, ma'am, an' I told them so. An' glad I am this night (if glad I could be in the middle of ruination), that madam is gone. Left him behind her she did, like a body might drop an old shoe in the bog. It was her that put the badness in his head, or he never would ha' thought of it. There was a deal of grumblin' in his nature, but not much harm at the bottom. It was the witch that did it on us. The elements itself couldn't bear her, an' the ground rose up and threw her out——"

"She was not fit for travelling, poor creature!" said Mildred.

"Oh, sure, the military will look afther her, an' get her everything she wants, an' land her safe where she came from. The like of her does always light on their feet, same as the cats. But oh, Mrs. O'Donovan, here's the Major! They're bringin' him here to your charity —all that's left of him!"

Four or five men, reeking with mud and bog water, carrying the Major on a wreck of a house door, were at the threshold. The old man was unconscious, and his face looked ghastly in the firelight as they placed the stretcher with its burthen on the floor. He was soon stripped of his wet clothing, wrapped in blankets, and put to bed in Mrs. O'Donovan's best apartment.

Restoratives were applied, and after a long time consciousness returned, bringing with it acute pain from internal injury. Kerrigan hastened in quest of the nearest doctor, hoping to find a road or track still passable, and Mildred and Honoria prepared to sit up all night with their patient.

The changes so suddenly wrought seemed to have stricken them almost dumb. They went about the necessary arrangements with scarcely a word, and only a look of mutual agreement as to things that must be done.

Mildred, with her years of experience of the vicissitudes of life, and her accustomedness to the acceptance of the unexpected rulings of Providence, took this revolution quietly; but to Honoria it seemed that miracles had been wrought, and everything around her was part of a bewildering dream. While her imagination struggled with the dream, her wits and her hands were awake and busy with the emergency.

The enemy who had been about to trample them under his feet had suddenly been struck down and flung into the arms of their mercy. There was now no cruel Major sitting up in the Castle yonder, designing ruin; but here was a crushed old man lying helpless on the bed that was to have been, by his orders, thrown out that day upon the roadside.

"If it had been an hour later," whispered Honoria, "there would not have been a bed or a shelter to receive him."

"Almighty God knows what He is about, as the people say," said Mildred.

They passed a grievous night, stealing in and out of the patient's room, striving to soothe him, listening to his moans, not sure of whether he was quite conscious, or aware of their presence or of his surroundings.

"I believe he thinks he is lying wounded on a battlefield," said Honoria, coming back to the fire in the house-place after a long watch by his bedside.

"He murmured just now something about dying like a soldier——"

Early in the morning the doctor arrived, riding on a surefooted pony, which, if not educated to bog slides, knew how to pick its steps through bogland difficulties. The doctor found the patient in a dangerous state, and remained on the spot. During the course of the day other injured creatures were carried into the farm-house to be attended to, and the O'Donovan homestead was turned into a hospital. Some of the hurt and afflicted from another direction were taken into the Castle, where Mrs. Brennan now reigned supreme and had plenty of time to look after them.

The dinner that was to have been eaten by the master and Mrs. Turbary was divided among the famishing, seeing that the evictor had been evicted and could not come home to take his seat at the head of his own table.

Emmeline's unfinished diary lay between the leaves of her blotter upstairs in her room, and the events of that eventful day were destined to remain unrecorded therein.

The living-rooms were deserted, and the servants went about with scared faces, trying to do something for the unfortunates who sought refuge in their quarters. Out of the high windows of the tower the length and breadth of the disaster could be seen, a wide stretch of level country tossed into hillocks of ruin, with house walls and roof thatches moving about among waves of mud and bosses of uprooted heather.

"It's wholesale eviction an' no mistake," said the spectators. "And where will the Major be gettin' his rents and his taxes after this?"

Kerrigan made his way back as soon as possible, having summoned the doctor, and mounted guard as head nurse over his poor old master. It was feared that the Major would die of his injuries. Some of his ribs were broken, and his back was badly strained. While the homeless tenants of many ruined cabins were drafted away to neighbouring workhouses, their landlord lay waiting for death under the only roof that was available as a shelter for his sufferings.

After two or three days he seemed to get a little better. His memory returned with a clear consciousness of the thing that had happened. The doctor thought it might be what the country people call "a lightness before death", but such as it was the change enabled him to recognize those who were taking care of him, and to speak to them.

"Is that you, Kerrigan?" he asked, unable to turn his head to see who was sitting by his bedside.

"No," said Honoria softly; "Kerrigan is gone to rest awhile. He will come back directly."

"And who are you?" asked the sufferer.

"I am Honoria Turbary," said the girl in the same soothing voice. "In this house I am called Noreen. I hope you are feeling a little better."

"Whose is the house?" asked the patient.

"It is Mrs. O'Donovan's house. You were hurt in the bog slide and carried in. Kerrigan and the doctor are taking care of you."

"And you and Mrs. O'Donovan. I see it all. I am the miserable old man who persecuted you, and whom God has punished."

His voice as well as his words were so unlike anything she had known of him before that tears rushed

to Honoria's eyes. Never had she seen suffering like this before, or beheld what appeared to be the near approach of death. She forgot the harshness and cruelty that had taught her to hate him, and thought only of the anguish of a remorseful heart aroused too late to a knowledge of its own blunders.

"You must not speak like that," she said. "You did not mean to persecute. You only made mistakes, and God will put them right. Try to rest now, sir, and get well——"

"Why should I get well, who have earned nothing but the hatred of my fellow-creatures?"

"No, no," said Honoria, "we do not hate you. You gave me food and shelter when I was a wild little fool and annoyed you. You are my father's kinsman, and I would rather love you than hate you. Here is Kerrigan, and he will talk to you better than I can talk."

Kerrigan slipped into her place, and Honoria went in search of Mrs. O'Donovan, weeping.

"He is either better, or he is going to die," she said. "I never heard anything so pitiful as the sound of his voice uttering his self-reproaches."

It was thought that he would die that night; but instead of dying he fell asleep, and awakened in the morning decidedly better.

The doctor was astonished.

"I believe he will now recover," he said. "There is nothing so tough as the constitution of an old soldier."

Kerrigan was indefatigable in his efforts at nursing, and when his master slept he would steal into the house-place from the sick-room to hear how the others

of the injured were faring, and to ease his heart by speaking a few words to Honoria or Mrs. O'Donovan.

"Sure he'll never be his own man again at the best of it!" he said. "An' what's to become of him?"

"That's a question he didn't ask about others," said Mildred sadly.

"He was good to me," said Kerrigan. "Oh, what wouldn't I give to hear him threatenin' to throw the clothes-brush at me! But he meant no harm to anybody."

"Well, the harm's done without him," said Mildred, "and we are not to put God's doing to his account."

"True for you, Mrs. O'Donovan. But oh, *maisha*! what is his lordship about over there in England? Has he heard of the trouble we have in it at all, at all?"

"He will have Mrs. Turbary to take care of," said Honoria with a little smile.

"It's little *gra* he has for her, I'm thinkin'. He's a good hand at knowin' the differ betune a cat an' a woman. The Major isn't. She had him purred round to that degree he would believe anything she told him. We'll see if she'll offer to come back to the Castle now—she could get at it by the back ways—and take care of him, now that the property's ruinated an' the rents gone, an' God knows what little money in the bank for the poor old creature to be drawin' out of it with the stroke of his pen in his cheque book—an' nobody knowin' where that same cheque book is, maybe all used up, and the bank refusin' him another on account of his misfortunes. Sure I know the hard ways o' them banks!"

"I don't think Mrs. Turbary will come back," said

Mildred, "and I don't see how the Major is to get back to the Castle, either. He must stay with us here, and we will do the best we can for him until something can be discovered about the state of his affairs."

"But your farm is gone, Mrs. O'Donovan, an' your own means is stopped, small as they were. An' you were all packed up, an' arrangements made to go where you could get somethin' to do, to be gettin' on with. An' now here y' are in this bog, with the Major to do for, an' you not able to stir a foot."

"Wait a bit, Kerrigan," said Mrs. O'Donovan. "It's God's own doing remember, and he's going to see to it."

But Kerrigan thought he had reason to be downcast, for he had written to Lord Gytrash and received no answer.

CHAPTER XXVII

"A Ridiculous Tragedy"

THOUGH Emmeline's diary was left in her blotter at Glyn, containing only a few words of introduction to what promised to be a striking account of impending events, it was not long before she set to work to continue her interrupted report to her friend in India.

"Oh, dear Carrie, when last I wrote to you how little I dreamed of the news I have now to communicate! You will see that I am at Tam Towers, but of how I got here you would never conceive in the wildest flights of your imagination! Oh, what scenes I have witnessed, what misery I have endured in that dreadful country! Excuse me if I am a little excited, for my nerves have not yet regained their equilibrium!

"Where can I begin the story of this frightful experience? In my last letter I told you that the evictions on the Major's property were drawing near, and that curiosity would probably lead me to be a witness of so peculiar an occurrence, a spectacle to be seen, I am told, in no other country.

"When the day arrived it was a treacherously fine morning after long rain, and the Major and I set out to see that obstinate Mrs. O'Donovan obliged by the military and police to leave her house, as she ought to have done long ago, without waiting for compulsion.

We had nearly crossed the bog that separates the Castle from the farm when the sky grew dark, rain and storm came on, and with an appalling noise the hideous bog rose up around us. It seemed to turn into a roaring sea, and came rushing on us furiously, tossing stones and heather right and left, and threatening to swallow us.

"It was like an earthquake. The Major told me to run for my life, and I am thankful I had presence of mind to do so. How I escaped I cannot imagine. I am really proud of my courage. I reached the road where the eviction had been going forward; but that of course was interrupted. Fortunately for me the military were there, and through their kind attention I was conveyed to Galway.

"You will ask what became of the Major, and up to the present I really do not know. Not being very active he could not run as I did, and I fear the worst. It will be a sad reverse of fortune for him if he survives, and too provoking just at the moment when he was hoping to improve matters. It will always be a pleasant recollection to me that I did my best to advise and help him.

"But to return to my own escape. I made my way to London, and having arranged my wardrobe (the sales were going on, and I picked up some pretty things cheap), I set out at once for Yorkshire, feeling sure that my dear cousin Jim would be glad to give me hospitality after my dreadful experiences. As I knew that he was not yet quite recovered from the effects of his accident, I was confident that he would be doubly rejoiced to see me, and I was quite prepared to act as a nurse and companion. So I resolved to take him by surprise, without waiting for an invitation.

"I got a beautiful day for my journey to Yorkshire, and felt quite in good spirits. It would never do to arrive with a serious face to depress poor Cousin Jim. Such were my generous intentions when I left the train and drove straight with my luggage to the Towers.

"You can imagine my disappointment when I learned that his lordship was not at home.

"'I know he is invalided,' I said to the servant, 'but I am sure he will admit me. Please let him know that his cousin, Mrs. Turbary, has come to see him.'

"'I assure you, madam,' said the man, 'that Lord Gytrash is not here. He left home for Ireland twenty-four hours ago.'

"'For Ireland!' I exclaimed.

"'Yes, madam. Something has happened there that made his lordship uneasy. He was not very fit to travel, but he went.'

"Imagine my disgust! But I was not to be baffled. I asked to see the housekeeper. Of course the servants all remembered me, and I must say they might have given me a warmer welcome. But you never can count upon that class of people.

"The housekeeper was civil, however, and agreed with me that her master would be annoyed if I were sent from his door, and obliged to travel back with my luggage to London.

"'Of course,' I said, 'his lordship will expect me to stay here till his return. I will write to him immediately.'

"I directed her to prepare for me the same room I occupied when here before. It is the best of the visitors' chambers, sheltered and airy, and looks out on a pleasant part of the gardens. What a contrast to

my barren apartment at Glyn! Ought I not to be thankful for any occurrence that has wrought such a delightful transformation?

"I unpacked my trunks—new trunks, new contents; and in that was a certain satisfaction. Fortunately I had worn my purse, containing part of Jim's last present, a fifty-pound note, round my neck, and I had been able to get a few necessary belongings. I took possession of all the nice drawers and wardrobes that I had emptied so unwillingly half a year ago, and made myself thoroughly at home. The housekeeper looked rather sulky at first, but I have quite reduced her to meekness, and have everything now my own way.

"Of course the place is a little dull. There is no house party, and it is not very easy to amuse oneself. I make the best of it, however, order the carriage every day, and am driven about the neighbourhood, making acquaintance with this part of the country and finding out the residents whom I met at Christmas. As his lordship's cousin I was sure of a polite reception, but I am happy to find that part of my welcome is due to the fact that those who met me here before evidently found me agreeable.

"So you will see, dear Carrie, that, all things considered, I have come rather well through an extraordinary trial, and that as far as comfortable circumstances are concerned I am not to be pitied. The cookery here is of course immensely superior to that at Glyn, and even my meals, taken as they are in solitary state, are a luxury.

"But, alas! there is uncertainty and a gnawing anxiety underlying even sweetbreads and soufflés and nicely cushioned carriages with delightfully easy springs.

"To return to my anxious state of mind. I have written to Gytrash at Glyn, and have received no answer. Doubtless there are many ways of accounting for this. The postal connection may have been cut off by the bog slide. He may not have been able to find a way to Glyn himself. He cannot walk at present without a crutch, Why did he go off like that to risk his health and mix himself up with the Major's misfortunes? What good did he think he could do? In all probability our Cousin Turbary is no more, and if he still survives, his affairs will be in a pitiable condition. It would have been much wiser for Gytrash to have stayed quietly here, and waited for the storm to blow over. Nobody could have blamed him, seeing his own state of health. And he might have relied on my readiness to come over at once, and bring him all the news.

"Then there is another consideration that weighs on my mind. Even if he makes his way to Glyn, the Castle will now be impossible as a dwelling-place. If the Major be alive he will be ill, probably in bed, with Kerrigan attending him. The servants will be weeping and wailing over the ruin of their friends, food supplies will be shortened by the difficulty of conveyance. Even during the one night I spent in a hotel in Galway I heard of all these usual consequences of a bog slide. Gytrash will have to look around for hospitality elsewhere, and perhaps he will get it from those wealthy people, whoever they are, with whom that objectionable young person whom they call Lady Honoria has spent the last six months to my certain knowledge.

"And here you have the key to my chief uneasiness. That ambitious girl will have opportunity for strengthening her influence over him, and if he should bring her

here by and by as Lady Gytrash, there is an end of all my hopes of a brilliant future for my son—not to speak of myself!

"So now you see that though I am so nicely settled here, I am still feeling an unpleasant uncertainty about important issues, still proving the extreme difficulty of arranging matters satisfactorily when you have to reckon with the probable contrariness of the intentions of others. If one could only get all the purblind people to see with the clearness of one's own vision, what a great deal more light there would be in this bewildering world!

"As it is, at this moment I can only resign myself to wait and hope for a letter from Gytrash. He will perhaps write to his man here giving an address, and when I know exactly where he is I will write to him again.

"And now for my last cause for anxiety. I have always assured you, my friend, that the motive for my desire to influence my relatives is a motherly ambition for my son. And he, too, is delaying to answer to my expectations. Rolf at his college is not all that I could wish for, and I cannot bring him here till I am sure that he will do me credit. I have not gone to see him, because I want him to feel that he is in disgrace with me until such time as I may hear a better account of him. Physically nature has done a great deal for him. He has a handsome face and a fine figure, and it is hard to understand what it is that can be wanting in him. I do not believe that a son of mine can have a deficiency of brains, whatever his teachers may say, though I own that he has a sulky temper. He will be a man to look splendid in a uniform, and that goes a long way in the making of a soldier.

"Now, I have inflicted a shockingly long letter on you, dear Carrie, but I know your sympathetic heart. I will keep this open for a day or two longer, in the hope of being able to give you a little more news of my Cousin Jim."

The letter lay in Emmeline's desk for some days, and was withdrawn for the addition of a postscript.

"A letter from Gytrash at last. He makes me very welcome, dear fellow, and hopes I am comfortable! It is an odd letter. However, my cousin Jim is nothing if not eccentric. I must not forget to mention that the Major is alive, but is so broken up that it might be better if he were not, though Gytrash does not think so. The oddest part of the whole situation is that Lady Honoria is nursing Cousin Turbary! Of how that came to pass he does not inform me. The Major is lying in the O'Donovan farm-house, the only place, it seems, to which he could be carried as a shelter when recovered in a shattered condition from the bog. It reads like a feature in a play, doesn't it? But Gytrash, who is ordinarily such a joker, seems to take the situation quite seriously.

"Where he is staying himself he does not say, nor how it happens that, if the Major is ill at the O'Donovan farm, the Lady Honoria can be nursing him. The whole thing is a provoking puzzle to me. And there is that audacious girl cleverly playing a charming part, I have no doubt, in the middle of a ridiculous tragedy."

CHAPTER XXVIII

"Put me in the Coal-hole"

It was true that Lord Gytrash found difficulty in making his way to Glyn, but he did so by the same means as enabled Emmeline herself to leave it, that is, by sheer determination to attain his object.

Heber, who had been doing some business for his mother with the Major's solicitor in Galway, met his lordship in the street, getting along on a crutch, and looking a good deal shaken by his recent illness. He was indeed so much changed that Heber would scarcely have recognized him had Gytrash not halted before him and called out:

"Hello, my boy! are you not the son of the widow O'Donovan at Glyn?"

"I am Heber O'Donovan," said the youth.

"Can you tell me how is my old friend, Major Turbary?"

"He will recover," said Heber, "though he is very broken, and suffering."

"Better news than I feared to hear. I want to see him. They tell me the road is difficult. How had I better proceed?"

"I should advise you to stay where you are, my lord. Travelling that way is rough at present."

"You are going back there yourself, however? I intend to go. Will you take me as a travelling companion?"

"Willingly. But you see the Castle is impossibly cut off from the farm, where the Major is lying."

"Lying at the farm! In your mother's house? In the very house from which he was proceeding to evict her?"

"There is no other house available. Humble as it is, it was the only port in the storm."

"And your mother is taking care of him?"

"My mother and Noreen—and Kerrigan."

Lord Gytrash drew in a long breath, and was silent. Heber continued:

"He has pulled through a bad time, but the doctor says he is over the immediate danger."

"Can you take me with you to the farm?"

"I can take you there, my lord, but I cannot promise you much in the way of lodging or entertainment."

"Hang lodging and entertainment!" said Lord Gytrash. "I want to go there."

Heber found further dissuasion useless, and they started together for Glyn. They left the train when it could take them no farther on their way, and proceeded by car the rest of the journey, with many adventures where the road was interrupted by the incursions of the wandering bog. There was plenty of time for talk during the long drive, and Lord Gytrash made the most of the opportunity by asking blunt questions.

"What is going to be the upshot of all this with regard to you and your mother?"

"There is a hitch, of course," said Heber. "We were

ready to march, and to seek our fortunes elsewhere. The delay will make it more difficult."

"What kind of a fortune were you intending to seek?"

Heber laughed. "I am young and strong," he said, "and there is work in the world for those who are able and willing to do it."

"What particular work are you willing and able to buckle to?"

"I have a turn for engineering. My particular madness is a belief that I have a talent for construction, and that I want an opportunity to give it practical value."

"You don't talk like a farmer's boy; and that has been your bringing up, hasn't it?"

"I have done a good bit of farming, but it hasn't occupied me all the time."

"What about education?"

"Thanks to Mr. Ferrall, I am not altogether ignorant."

"Oh, Ferrall!" The allusions he had heard Mr. Ferrall make to his pupils rose to the surface of his lordship's memory. "What did he teach you, for instance?"

Heber laughed again. "Oh, it is a long story! For instance, Latin and Greek, and some other languages. My mother taught me English and French, and the poor people Irish."

"What more did Mr. Ferrall teach you?"

"Mathematics, for one thing. That comes easy and natural to me."

"Indeed! I confess it is a study that never interested me at all. But from what you say Seagull

Lodge appears to have stood to you as a kind of university. At your age I was at Cambridge, but games were more interesting to me than learning."

"Mr. Ferrall has told me that such is often the case. That was when I was inclined to repine at my disadvantages. He is a University man himself, and he says he has done nothing in the world."

"He has done something for you, however. What does he think about you?"

"He thinks I am too ambitious, but he believes I have that something in me which works out with energy and patience."

"Don't let him be a clog on your wheel."

"Oh, no! He would never be that. He is the ballast of the ship that is me."

"Talking of ships, are you the lad I have heard him mention who was dreaming of building an air-ship to astonish the world?"

"I have no doubt I am that dreamer," said Heber; "if it be a dream."

"It all begins to come back," said his lordship; "Ferrall's pupils, and his mathematical boy who spent all his spare moments designing airships, and had a model secreted in a cave——"

"All that is yesterday," said Heber.

"And now there is to-morrow to look to," said Gytrash.

"God is sending to-morrow. I believe all this rupture with the old place is providential for me."

"What! The Major's injuries and losses? The ruin of your poor neighbours, who have no genius for construction, and never heard of mathematics?"

"No, no! I only spoke of myself. My mother says

God has a good meaning in everything He does. And this is His doing, due to no wickedness of man. Even the Major could not have brought the bog slide upon us."

"Even the Major! Is he your Ultima Thule of wickedness?"

"He has been cruel, my lord."

"And your mother is nursing him!"

"She is a Christian."

"Your mother is a remarkable woman, and you do her no discredit."

"She is no ordinary woman, my lord. It is my ambition to replace her in the position she is fit for, in the society to which she was born."

"Ah!"

Lord Gytrash was struggling to remember more of matters he had heard mentioned by Mr. Ferrall. There had been something unusual and romantic in the circumstances of this Mrs. O'Donovan.

"Now, my lord," said Heber, "we are coming to a point at which we must leave the car. The bog is still encroaching here, and the way, I see, is quite cut off. Even twenty-four hours make a difference. I propose to get a boat and go round to our place by crossing a creek of the shore and getting up to the house by the rocks."

"Is the house itself in danger?"

"I think not. Fortunately it is placed high above the level of the bog. Our fields are now bog, I am sorry to say, but the house, with a certain stony plateau around it, seems safe enough for the present, at all events."

A boat was procured, and Heber proved his skill as

a boatman by boldly heading the breakers that made the crossing of an ugly bit of sea a rather dangerous adventure. A good many things had to be packed into the boat, food supplies from Galway procured by Heber, and some added comforts for his friend by Lord Gytrash.

Kerrigan hurled himself down the rocks to meet the boat, and helped to tug it in.

"Oh, I knew your lordship wouldn't forget us!" he cried. "God bless you! An' you with a leg of your own! But sure the Major's better, an' it's him will be out of his skin with joy to see you."

Meanwhile Mildred and Honoria stood in dismay to see the arrival of a visitor for whom they had no proper accommodation. His lordship walked up to the door, his hat in hand, appealing for hospitality which could not be refused.

"Mrs. O'Donovan," he said, "I fear I have come to inconvenience you still further — but put me in the coal-hole or the cowhouse, or any place where I shall be least in the way."

Mildred could not but smile, and Honoria laughed. The idea of Lord Gytrash lodged in the cowhouse was funny enough to dispel depression for the moment.

"You are welcome to all we can do for you, my lord," said Mildred. "Your friend will be glad to see you."

Kerrigan led him to the Major's bedside, and left him there. Nobody knew what passed between the friends who had so strangely met in this unlikely place. Mildred and Honoria busied themselves in arrangements to house his lordship to the best of their ability. The "Memory Chamber" was hastily prepared to receive him. The Major was in possession of the best bedroom. Mildred and Honoria had packed themselves into a

smaller chamber, and Heber took up his quarters in the loft.

Lord Gytrash declared himself delighted with his lodging, and the homely *ménage* seemed to amuse him as a novelty. It pleased him to devote himself to the invalid for a part of the day, to potter about among the rocks for an hour or two, and to sit at the fireside in the house-place in the evenings, chatting with Mrs. O'Donovan. In this way he gained a great deal of information about the country round about which was as new to him as if he had never set foot in it before.

"Here I have been," he said, "coming and going for years, fishing the lakes and shooting game, and never opened my eyes to anything but my own selfish enjoyment."

"I don't see what you could have done to help us, my lord," said Mildred. "Even with the best intentions you could not have taken us in hand."

"I might have advised the Major," he said. "Instead of which, I left him in the hands of a very bad counsellor."

To the Major himself, as soon as he was able to bear discussion, his lordship spoke as plainly.

"What has become of poor Emmeline?" was one of the first questions asked by the invalid.

"Poor Emmeline is making herself exceedingly comfortable at Tam Towers," said his lordship. "You may relieve your mind of anxiety about her. She will always contrive to get the best of things wherever she goes."

"She was very devoted to me," said the Major, "very agreeable and anxious to advise me about my affairs——"

"And did it badly. I am willing to suppose that

her intentions were good, and that when I carry you off to Tam Towers, as I intend, as soon as it can be done, she will be willing to devote herself to you there also. It will give her a little occupation. She is a busy spirit, and must get something to do in a quiet place, or I know not what may be the consequences."

"Do you intend her to remain there?" asked the Major, feeling that he should not need her so much if he were enjoying the society of his friend Gytrash at the Towers.

"I don't feel that my intentions will have anything to do with it. She is there, and she means to stay, and I do not see my way to dislodging her. Your latterly developed affection for her will make things easier for me. With her and Kerrigan to take care of you I shall be sure that you will be excellently looked after."

"I don't say I have an affection for her," said the Major, "but she made herself very agreeable. Kerrigan can't endure her, and I confess I could do without Emmeline rather than without Kerrigan."

"There she is, however," said his lordship, "and there you are going to be. The place is big, and there is room for a good deal of huffing and quarrelling without the result of an earthquake."

With this Gytrash left his friend for the hour, to ruminate on the questions of whether he would or would not like to have Mrs. Turbary hanging round him at Tam Towers, and whether the woman who left him in the bog, and quitted the country without knowing whether he was living or dead, was likely to devote herself to his comfort and happiness in his present state of poverty and infirmity.

CHAPTER XXIX

"That Will Fetch Her"

HEBER spent most of the time exploring the extent of the bog slide, and learning the fate of the poor tenants of the cabins, most of which were in ruins, if not absolutely carried piecemeal from their sites.

Charity was at work to gather up the helpless and homeless, and most people were already harboured in workhouses and hospitals. A few nearest the rocky shore, like the Lacey family, were holding their ground, and putting their hope in fishing nets and boats. To these Heber was lending a helping hand to get gear in order, often spending a night on the sea, taking the place of a disabled hand. It frequently happened that Lord Gytrash went out along the rocks and beach expecting to find him, and was disappointed. But at last, one afternoon, Heber, returning from Lacey's, came upon his lordship lying in wait for him.

"You are as difficult to interview as a Cabinet Minister," said the lord. "I've been wanting to hear more about that model of yours, and there you are bog-trotting from morning till night, as if brogues were what you wanted instead of wings."

"'Sufficient for the day,' my lord. Earth and not air is the opposing force at present. My poor friends, those who remain, are throwing themselves on the

mercy of the sea as their only resource. But their boats are bad, and they have no harbour."

"You were out all last night with them?"

"Yes. And a rough night it was, and a bad take."

"Why have they bad boats and no harbour?"

"Because there is no money," said Heber, with a slight laugh. "Harbours are not put together with a few loose stones. We are always tinkering up the old boats, but money would be needed there too, to make them fit. A splendid fishing station might be established on this foreshore, if lives of men, if presence of a population, were of any account. But the world seems to think that something better could be done with the seaboard of Connaught than encouraging the rearing of the brave men who 'infest' it."

"They talk of planting trees."

"They would not grow. It has been tried. At a place not twenty miles from here you will see the dried-up remains of a planting that cost money. A man's presence would have been more profitable than any tree of that ghost of a dead wood. If the money spent there had been spent on the fisheries, there would have been some return. A bleak shore is not the ground for raising forests, but it is the place where gold can be hauled from the ocean to keep human life on the land."

"Major Turbary had not money to do what you suggest should be done," said his lordship.

"No," said Heber, "but he might have been content to live and let live. He was getting more from his tenants than his property was worth. To pay the rent, such as it was, for the miserable little patches between the bog and rock, the people risked their lives at sea

on a dangerous coast, and went to England and Scotland to work at the harvesting. The land did not yield him the rent. Now that the people with their industry are gone, where will he get an income from his rocky estate? The bog has taken the green patches and the hovels out of his hands, and his castle stands there by itself, in solitary glory."

"You speak bitterly, young man, and I can hardly wonder. Now, I have been asking myself what would you do if you had money enough and were landlord of a property of this kind? I know what you would do for the fishing. But what about the land?"

"If I were a millionaire I would buy such a place as this merely for the pleasure of owning so magnificent a piece of God's creation, and of having a certain right to interest myself in the lives of the people. I would give a prize to every man who contrived to draw a living out of the stony patch, veiled with green, which he laboured to make a little productive, as no man of another country would have patience and industry to do. I should give him his free will of sea wrack and bog, to make his own use of them. I would build him a house instead of a hovel——"

"And no rent?"

"Not a shilling. As I have said, I would give him a prize for inhabiting my houses, living on my barren soil, and rearing up wholesome, hardy girls and boys to lend a hand in building up the prosperity of their native country."

"Oh, youth! youth!" cried Lord Gytrash.

"I am young," said Heber, "but I hope I may never grow old if inhumanity be a necessary development of the years to come."

Lord Gytrash sat on the rock silently for a few moments, looking at Heber and pondering. At last he said:

"It's a bad business at the best. But we cannot blame the Major for anything but his intentions. He didn't do the bog slide. What do the sufferers say about that?"

"They say he hadn't luck, which is undeniable."

"What do you say?"

"I am sorry for him as a man, but I do not pity him as a landlord."

"You are leaving it all behind you, and you are glad to go?"

"Because my own future calls me. But I grieve to leave ruin behind me, an empty wilderness where I had many friends."

"Well, my boy, all this is quite outside of what I wanted with you. I am curious to see the model of an airship which you keep hid in a cave."

"Oh, I am sorry to say it is all packed up for transport! But I can show you my plans."

The plans were produced, and Lord Gytrash was soon deep in the consideration of the difficult problems and the ingenious inventions which had long occupied Heber's continual thought. Heber's doings, Heber's powers, expectations, ambitions, became the interest of his life in its present narrow limits. In a small house, where the women, however attractive, were too busy managing for an over-large household; with Kerrigan chattering, and the Major remorseful and depressed by his infirmity, this man who had travelled with a crutch from England to sympathize with misfortune would scarcely have known how to endure

the monotony and emptiness of those days only for his interest in Heber. The strong, hopeful nature, the gay temper and lively imagination, even the healthy, powerful physique of the irrepressibly sanguine young man were delightful to him.

"Oh, youth! youth!" he cried to himself again and again. And yet it was not youth alone that was so fresh and attractive to him; for all youth is not like Heber's youth, a fact that his lordship was very well aware of.

Occasionally he found an opportunity for a little talk with the busy Mrs. O'Donovan.

"I envy you your son," he said. "What a thing it must be to see a youth like that standing before you, and say to yourself: 'I brought him into the world. He is my own!'"

"It is a happiness," said Mildred, with light springing into her anxious eyes.

"I have never thought of it in that way before," said his lordship, "and I needn't think of it now. I suppose my own youth was so pleasant to me that it was enough, and I didn't think of crying on another youth to come out of futurity and stand by me. Well, perhaps if I had a son he wouldn't be at all like your son. He would probably be an extravagant rascal, as stupid as an owl, and even of less use in the world than his father before him."

"Heber is good, and he is clever," said Mildred, scarcely knowing how she ought to notice such an outburst of confidence.

"Clever! I should think he is! And with your permission I am going to give him the opening he is in need of. I shall drop him into a big place in England,

where he will have time and means to prove the power that is in him. I have already written to make arrangements to that effect. Meanwhile you are all coming with me to Tam Towers, you and the Major, Heber, Honoria, and all——"

"Impossible, my lord," said Mildred. "The Major will need your attention; but Heber and Honoria and myself intend to work together and to be independent."

"Hang independence!" cried Lord Gytrash. "I tell you, madam, you will have to agree to my terms. They are the terms of a genuine friend. I want you all, especially Heber. He will have to live at his works, but Tam Towers must be his home to come to when convenient. As for the girl you call Noreen, I have a right to her. She has no nearer relative, and you, madam, though you have been so long her only friend, are no relative at all. I intend to make a daughter of her——"

"Oh!" exclaimed Mildred.

"You are not going to set her mind against it?"

"No, my lord. Her welfare is dearer to me than anything else in the world, next to Heber's——"

"Then let her be persuaded that I want to be a real father to her. Her own father is dead. Of that we must be certain. If not, we should have heard tidings of him in the course of so many long years."

"She dreams of his return."

"I know she does, and Heber encourages her. But all he wants is an excuse to charter an airship of his own invention to fly from Norway to the Polar regions in search of frozen-out wanderers."

"I know," said Mildred.

"Let him fly if he likes. But he will never find the Earl of Finbarr. There is probably a monument of ice over his body as high as this house. Or he is floating on the Arctic Ocean, entombed in the heart of an iceberg——"

"Do not say those things to Noreen, I beg," said Mildred.

"Not I, indeed. The young lady has a will of her own, and I do not want her to turn it against me."

"She is a very sweet girl where she loves and trusts."

"That is just it. She must love and trust me as a father and a protector. My decent behaviour in this matter is rather belated, I admit. I am handicapped in my efforts to gain her affection by my ridiculous conduct in the past."

"She knows you are good, my lord."

"No, she doesn't. Excuse me, but how could she know any such thing? But I want her to believe that I am not so bad as I have appeared to be. I want her to take me on trust. I may win on her by slow degrees, and gain her as a daughter. You have the best right to your son, Mrs. O'Donovan, but I have the best right to Honoria."

"You have truly said that she has a will of her own, Lord Gytrash, and I should scarcely know how to oppose her in a matter that affected her strongly."

"Then throw the weight of your own desires into the scale. Tell her you wish to accept my pressing invitation to the Towers until such time as you shall be able to see farther; but that you cannot do so unless she will accompany you. That, I think, will fetch her."

"I dare say it will. And for her sake, and in gratitude for your goodness to my son, I will gladly take advantage of your hospitality until, as you say, I may be able to see my way farther."

"Good!"

"And you must not think that I am not keenly alive to the great importance to Noreen of your generous intentions with regard to her. So brilliant a piece of good fortune is not to be refused to her by her friends. I will do all I can to further your wishes. But I advise you not to be too hasty with her at this emergency. She is as proud as a queen, and would shrink from being taken up by you out of pity."

"Remembering I did not think of all that when she was ten years old? Well, it is natural. But I want to teach her to let bygones be bygones. She is to come as my honoured guest to Tam Towers, and for the rest, I will trust to the future to realize my hopes and work out my intentions."

CHAPTER XXX

Irrepressible Hope

It was true that Honoria was at first unwilling to agree to the proposal of Lord Gytrash to carry off the inmates of the farm, *en masse*, to Tam Towers.

"We had made other arrangements for ourselves," she said to Mildred, who broke the news to her. "I don't see why he should not be satisfied with the Major, for whose sake he came here. Why should he gather us all in as if we were paupers, and Tam Towers was a poor-house?"

"You are very proud, Noreen."

"Proud, am I—when I am preferring to be content with humble things? I have learned to hate castles, and towers, and titles, and all kinds of worldly, pretentious greatness. You have taught it to me yourself by words and by example."

"Why hate?" said Mildred. "To love what is better is wiser than to hate what is not so good. Look into your heart, and see if pride may not be the root of your humility."

"Pride, pride!" repeated Honoria. "I was ridiculously proud of my title when I was a forlorn little beggar."

"Because you thought it linked you to your father."

"If my father is now dead, as they maintain that he is, that link is broken, and I wish for no title. I would

rather help Heber in working for you than sit idly in Tam Towers as the dependent of Lord Gytrash. If that is pride, I am still proud——"

"It is pride."

"Perhaps it is, or some other cold thing that was planted early in my heart and too long nourished there, and is hard to kill."

"Kill it; for my sake."

"For your sake?"

"Don't you see, my dear, that my position is a difficult one? We were in very strained circumstances a few weeks ago, and now we are in worse condition. A start in the world seems impossible without help from a friend. Lord Gytrash has generously insisted on making himself that friend to me and to Heber——"

"To Heber?"

"To Heber. He tells me that he has already made arrangements to place my son in a working scientific *milieu*, which will enable him to develop his constructive genius, and probably lead to the making of his fortune."

"He has done this?"

"I have had several talks with him about it. He will inform Heber of it to-morrow. Meanwhile, unless your pride stands in the way, he will receive Heber's mother on a visit at his place while further movements are being thought of. But naturally, I, who am no relative, cannot accept if you, who are of his near kindred, persist in refusing his hospitality."

"I do not persist," said Honoria. "Do you think I could injure you and Heber?"

"I did not believe it. But you must do that good man justice. Try to soften your heart and feel kindly towards him."

Honoria was abashed, and her heart was touched. She went down among the rocks and hid herself and wept.

If Lord Gytrash was going to do great things for Heber she would forgive him, she would be grateful to him, she could almost love him!

On further reflection Mildred was keenly aware of the prudence that ought to be exercised in trusting to the fulfilment of all the present intentions of Lord Gytrash.

This man was, for the moment, cut off from the attractions of his own particular way of life, was confined to a narrow space among the rocks of a remote seashore, and had found occupation for his mind by interesting himself in the people around him. She felt sure of his sincerity, especially in his promises of helpfulness to Heber. Her faith in her son's will and power to make use of whatever means to his ends might be put in his way enabled her to see a great light in that direction of the future. But with regard to herself and Noreen she was not so certain of all that might arise out of her own too-ready compliance with his lordship's romantic proposals. She was sacrificing her own longing for independence to a fear of injuring the girl, and yet was it not probable that by over-persuading Honoria to be installed at Tam Towers she was giving occasion for that collision of wills of which even Lord Gytrash himself perceived the danger? Might not gradual approach to better understanding be a safer manner of proceeding? His lordship had hitherto been known as a freakish and seemingly irresponsible person, satisfied in the enjoyment of his own prosperous condition, and jeering and joking at everything less pleasurable that came in his way. At present his character appeared under a totally different aspect. Was this a light that would burn only

in a certain atmosphere? Would the air of Yorkshire see it wax gradually dim, or suddenly extinguish it?

The risk seemed worth taking. The chances were in favour of Honoria. There was yet another difficulty to be encountered, and Mildred waited anxiously for Heber's verdict, having promised not to speak to him on these matters until after he had been talked to by his lordship.

When her son came to her in a state of joyful excitement, she believed that all obstacles to his lordship's will had vanished. The youth poured out his hopes, already turned into realities, like a shower of gold into her lap, and for a long time could talk of nothing but the future that had opened before him.

But at last questions of detail arose, of present moment and immediate future, and Heber was confronted with the necessity for separation from his mother and Honoria.

"Cannot we live together? I shall earn a good wage at that place, and his lordship offers to make me an allowance now, which I can repay to him later."

"But, my boy, if we accept this generous assistance we must agree to his terms. He wants to benefit Honoria."

"He now wants the Lady Honoria, whom he once scorned," said Heber bitterly. "He would buy Noreen from us."

"Have we the right to buy her for ourselves with our poverty?"

"What does she say about it?"

"She has consented to go—for our sake."

"For our sake! I want to know how she feels it for herself."

"Honoria's heart is true. She does not even know that Lord Gytrash intends to make her his daughter and heiress."

Heber stood up and gazed steadily at his mother.

"That means that she and I are to be ultimately separated by the rank and wealth he will give her."

"Not necessarily, Heber. I do not believe that any such thought is in his mind. If it were, would he not act very differently towards us, who are not of his own and Honoria's kindred? I have told you that at the present moment Noreen is ignorant that he has any such intentions with regard to her. Let us act unselfishly, as she is acting. Let us accept this man's offers of friendship, leaving the future in the hands of the Providence that has sent him to us."

Heber turned away and went down to the sea alone, to wrestle with the foreboding that tragedy might yet darken a future which an hour ago was lit up with a sudden glory.

Noreen gone out of his life, what would the most assured success in the world be worth? Dust and ashes would be the whole of it.

But soon irrepressible hope sprang up again higher than ever. After all, rank and wealth were not everything. Energy and genius were the conquerors of the world. Noreen should be allowed to accept what was her own, and afterwards it might be his part to give her in addition more than all that could ever mean.

The doors of science were open to him, the region of all the powers of the human mind were before him, out of which to choose his own dominion. And of his kingdom, when he should come to it, Honoria should be queen.

In this happy mood he gave his consent to the pending arrangements for departure from Glyn.

The countryside was now a wilderness, except for a few fishermen's cabins on their rocky perch above the sea. The Castle was deserted and shut up. Mrs. Brennan had found another situation, and the other servants were all disbanded. Mr. Ferrall, who had been quite cut off by the bog slide, had gone to England before the arrival of Lord Gytrash, and there was no one to say good-bye to but the Laceys, and the few other fisher folks.

Lord Gytrash, the Major, and Kerrigan departed first; then Heber, who was required to take up his place at once at the works; and finally Mildred and Honoria set out for Galway.

It was a sad moment when Mildred closed her door and turned her back on the peaceful home of many years. An old man and woman, glad of a harbour, were placed there as caretakers. The most sacred of the little household gods were left undisturbed in their niches; for their owner still hoped to return one day to the beloved though humble homestead. Meanwhile the sea and the mountains, watchers of the long succession of days that had there passed over her head, should see her no more. The brown and purple mountains, always grave of aspect, seemed to grown stern with displeasure at her departure; and she looked back wistfully from the car that was taking her to an undesired world till she could no longer guess where the home was hidden away from her, perhaps for ever, among the folds of the receding hills.

Not so Honoria, who was all alive with the excitement of adventure. This going out into the world was to her like a child's entrance into Wonderland.

She had read much about the cities of the nations, but she had never been in a town. Her seventeen years had been spent between the rocks, the bogs, and the sea. All she knew of the great world of men and women beyond those blue hills on the inland horizon had been learned from books, and from the conversation of Mildred and Mr. Ferrall. She was aware of the unimportance of the old "Citie of the Tribes" in the modern world, and having read its history she expected no evidence of its ruined prosperity, no beauty in the streets from which the features of a bygone day had departed. Yet, withal, she delighted in exploring with Mildred the nooks and by-ways where still lurk traces of the old Spanish inhabitation, and in visiting that strange scene of living antiquity, so to speak, the town-remnant of an ancient separate people, known as the Claddagh.

Mildred and Honoria spoke the Irish language as readily as English, and they were welcome where ordinary visitors can scarcely penetrate. Among other discoveries they found they could provide themselves with a useful store of the crimson stuff, richly dyed with madder, supplied by the dark-faced Claddagh weaver who sits weaving in his booth, as his forefathers sat and wove, time ago incalculable.

Honoria's dress was now a matter of anxiety to Mildred, who, unknown to the girl, was spending money given her for the purpose by Lord Gytrash.

"That silk is quite too expensive," Noreen would say. "This serge will do very well. How shall we pay for it out of the little we have, and ought to be saving for our future housekeeping?"

CHAPTER XXXI

Emmeline to her Friend in India

"WHEN I last wrote to you, my dear Carrie, I little knew the extraordinary news my next letter would have to convey to you. Here it is, however. Before going into details I must tell you that we have now got Connaught in Yorkshire, the contents of Glyn Castle dropped into Tam Towers, and, as if that were not enough, the mistress of the wretched little farm, the woman evicted by the bog slide (as it happened) instead of by the Major, actually picked up off the roadside and thrown among us!

"They say she is a lady, and has a romantic story, and all that kind of stuff; but even if it be true I can't see that as any reason why Gytrash should bring her here. She is quite a good-looking person, and appears well-dressed, though always in black. It is ridiculous to see the great respect with which she is treated by Cousin Jim, and even by the Major.

"It seems that Cousin Turbary was carried into her house when hurt by the bog slide, and that she nursed him there for weeks. Very clever of her, one must say, when one sees how she is rewarded for her trouble. And I may tell you that during all the time of my loneliness and suspense in this place, with Jim absent, and the servants rather disagreeable, Gytrash himself

was lodged and entertained (!) by this same Mrs. O'Donovan in her little poky farm-house. Kerrigan was there, of course, in attendance on the Major, and the woman has a son who was also there. And the Lady Honoria appears to have arrived on the scene to contribute to the general inconvenience and absurdity.

"Her ladyship is very much on in this scene also. I complained some time ago that I was not allowed to make her acquaintance, but I certainly see enough of her now. It is quite farcical the fuss that is made about her—everybody bowing down before her, Jim paying her the most devoted attention, Mrs. O'Donovan watching over her sweetly, the Major delighted to have her in his room to talk to him, visitors coming and going, and all admiring her!

"And what part, think you, is your poor friend expected to play in this extraordinary household? The part of a meek companion to the cross old invalid Turbary!

"A few days after the assembling of this incongruous house party Cousin Jim gave me a plain hint that as Kerrigan had come to take care of his master my services would not be required, and that I was at liberty to conclude my visit if I pleased, and to betake myself to those other dear friends whose hospitality was no doubt awaiting me. You may imagine that this ungrateful treatment came on me like a thunderbolt.

"I bore it very patiently.

"'My dear Cousin Jim,' I said, 'I am not Major Turbary's nurse, nor his companion. At your urgent request I spent some months with him in his wilderness

in Connaught, trying to comfort his loneliness and to advise him for his good. You know what I have suffered in consequence of this compliance with your wishes. And now you would only permit me to remain under your roof on condition of my becoming his servant!'

"He might have known by my voice and my pocket-handkerchief that I was reduced to tears. But, would you believe it? he only laughed! Even the suffering from his leg (which by the way is quite gone) has not altered his habit of jeering at another person's affliction.

"'It would cost me a great deal of trouble,' he said, 'to remove you from under my roof, and at present I don't feel equal to it.'

"I took that as, after all, quite a touching admission. He is not so heartless as he finds it amusing to pretend to be.

"'Do not I know your generous and good heart?' I said. 'Far be it from me to hurt you by giving you that unnecessary pain——'

"He laughed again, and turned away quite suddenly, doubtless to hide his irrepressible emotion. So I have secured my footing here, dear Carrie, without binding myself by any promise to look after the Major.

"I confess, however, that Gytrash is always suggesting to me that attention to the invalid would provide me with a suitable occupation. I do what I can in that way to please him, for despite his generosity Cousin Jim could have a temper which I confess I should not like to provoke. He takes occasion to remind me of all the foolish, good-hearted things I used to say in my letters to him of my companionship with the Major,

and to suggest that I ought to be the more devoted to him now that he is so helpless.

"Then, when in a spirit of prudent compliance I present myself in the Major's rooms (he has a most comfortable suite of apartments) to play a game of cards or chess, I have to reckon with Kerrigan. This man, whose brogue sounds appalling in an English establishment, has nothing to do here except attend his master, take him about the gardens in a Bath chair, give him his meals and medicine, and chatter to him. I am well aware that Kerrigan never could abide me, and he makes me feel it more than ever here. Though never actually disrespectful to me, he has a way somehow of showing one in a light I cannot describe to you, as a sort of person whom I could not endure to think anyone should suspect me of being. He does it in such a manner as prevents my openly resenting it, or complaining of it, and I am sometimes at a loss to know whether he is impudently artful or blunderingly ignorant.

"Like everyone else, he is devoted to the Lady Honoria, whom he praises unceasingly to the Major in my presence, though I have more than once taken pains to make him feel that I consider the young lady overrated. And the Major listens to him quite contentedly, evidently having been persuaded that whatever attentions she may have shown him during his illness ought to blot out the memory of her former impertinence.

"And now, my dear Carrie, you will hardly need to be told of what is at the root of that anxiety which haunts your friend in the midst of luxury and pleasant society. You know I have long suffered from an exceeding great dread that Gytrash would fall in love

with this girl, who is so attractive to everybody seemingly except myself. You have asked me to describe her to you. She has that brilliant golden hair which to me is fatiguing to look at. There is too much dazzle of the sun in it. Her eyes are hazel, and her dark brows in so fair a face suggest to me pride and an imperious disposition. But she can smile so splendidly when she likes that no one perceives these indications but myself, and she is credited all round with an enchanting sweetness.

"Now, I hope I am not giving you too favourable an impression of her, for under all her charms I believe her to be an artful minx who has made up her mind to be mistress of Tam Towers. May Fate avert such ruin of my dearest hopes! And what an end in folly for my beloved Cousin Jim! I believe that I ought to warn him of his danger. As a friend, as a relative, might I not venture to remonstrate with him?"

While this letter was in course of production, Honoria was enjoying with all the zest of her youth the new scenes and circumstances with which her kinsman and host had surrounded her. Gratitude was quickly effacing resentment towards this man of power, who was showering benefits not only on herself but on those whom she loved. Heber wrote from his works in the most buoyant spirits. Lord Gytrash had made everything easy for him with his patrons and employers. His inventions were approved, and a construction was to be developed expected to be more successful than any airship as yet loose under the heavens. Mildred was making herself happy in her retiring way, chiefly occupied with knitting and sewing in her own quiet chamber, coming forth when required, taking her place

when there was company at the table, and being generally supposed to be Honoria's maternal aunt, a misapprehension that was mightily resented by Mrs. Turbary.

"To think," she wrote in her diary, which she kept for "Carrie", "of a person of that kind taking the head of his lordship's table, while his cousin's widow takes a less important place! I have spoken to her about it in a way she is not likely to forget. She assumes meekness, and refers me to Lord Gytrash, protesting her unwillingness to take up a position which in no way belongs to her. I have spoken to Cousin Jim on the subject, but with what a result! The farmer woman is indeed dethroned, but the place is not to be filled by your Emmeline, who has a right to it. A miss of seventeen is taking precedence of one who has the advantage of seniority in the family. It is the Lady Honoria who is henceforth to sit at the head of the dinner-table.

"She pretended at first to be very shy about it, but that is all over, and her ladyship takes on her honours as if she felt herself to be already the mistress of the Towers. Gytrash loads her with presents. Beautiful dresses arrive for her from London, and he has given her ever so much jewellery. Ah, dear Carrie, I can't help thinking of how sweet your Emmeline would have looked in these things long ago, and not so much amiss even as yet, I must in candour acknowledge! There is one lovely evening dress that is just my style. And he talks of taking her a trip to London and Paris and where-else, and of having a particularly brilliant house party at Christmas. In fact, the poor man has evidently lost his head, if not his heart. And I have not yet ventured to speak to him on the subject.

"Meanwhile we are having a great many dinner parties and some week-end visitors from London. Among these Mr. Ferrall has turned up, having escaped from the bog slide and settled for the present in England. Another guest is—no, you would never guess!—the son of the widow O'Donovan. It seems he is quite a genius, and Gytrash is patronizing him. What he is expected to do I am sure I do not know, but at present he is in the position of a common working man at some unpronounceable engineering works. Jim is making a fuss about him also, and insists on introducing him to Cousin Turbary's rooms to talk to him, and inform him of what is going on in the engineering world. And the Major receives him with pleasure. Oh, Carrie, could I ever have dreamed that my husband's aristocratic relatives would ever degenerate into radicals, in open sympathy with the lower and working classes!

"Of course, I am jealous when I see this young man brought to the front, and think of my own poor boy, who has not yet been presented to his relatives. You will ask why I do not have him here at once, and I can only point out to you the several reasons that have deterred me from making the attempt. I have tried to establish a footing with my cousins before venturing to claim their hospitality for two of us. That is one reason; and there are others. Rolf was never brilliant as a boy, and I wanted to wait for a further development. Then he is a big fellow for his age, and, naturally, I felt that his presence would make me appear old. It may seem a petty reason, but in my position it has its weight. But now I wish, at all risks, to impress Gytrash with the fact that there is

another young man in the world with a better right to his patronage than the farmer's son, and who ought to be presented to the world as his heir. I should be glad to go now and pay a visit to my son at his college. It is long since I have seen him, so busy have I been providing for his future interests. I should like to see him and instruct him a little as to the conduct I expect of him before introducing him at the Towers; but, my dear, here, again, the exigencies of my position get in my way. Did I leave the Towers now, even for one or two days, I am not sure that some advantage might not be taken of my temporary absence to make return difficult even without my son.

"So, my dear, I shall have to risk bringing him here, such as he may be, without my previous supervision and schooling. For I am determined that at all hazards he shall be included in the Christmas house party. Some of those I met here on a former occasion are to be among the guests. The dear Duchess of Doldrums has gone to Egypt to establish her English village in the desert, but her daughter and young granddaughter have accepted invitations.

"I have ordered a handsome new dress from Paris. I have no doubt my dear Cousin Jim will consent to pay for it, probably by way of a Christmas box."

CHAPTER XXXII

"Too Many of us Already"

HONORIA, in a long white satin robe, with her hands full of roses, was walking up and down a corridor, gathering up her courage to knock at Mildred's door. Heber had arrived in the afternoon, and was closeted with his mother, talking over their future movements. At last Honoria tapped on the panel, and was bidden to come in.

"May I join this council?" she said. "I have taken time by the forelock, you see, and am ready for dinner."

Heber's eyes sparkled with admiration and delight on beholding her.

"The Lady Honoria!" he exclaimed. "How well she becomes her title!"

"Do I?" said the girl. "But I am still Noreen, and I want to know what my mother and my brother are plotting."

"Only a little home for the mother," said Mildred. "Heber is as restive as I am at my lengthened sojourn here. We were talking of a cottage."

Honoria looked grave. "It is right," she said; "but remember, wherever you go, I go."

"No, dear, it is your duty to remain here with your father's kindred. We who are not of your blood will not take you into povertv."

"Are you not nearer to me in real love than they are? You loved me when I was a beggar. They are bountiful to me now, and I amuse them. Any day they may cast me off."

"If they do, you will come to us."

"Let me come now, and I will not be a burthen to you. I could teach children, I could play the harp at drawing-room parties——"

"We are not less generous than you are, Noreen. Heber, what do you say to it? Can you see Lady Honoria a drudge in our poor home?"

"No," said Heber passionately. "One day I shall have a better home. Till then I have nothing to say. For the present Noreen will consent to be the Lady Honoria."

Noreen was startled by the passion in his voice, and raising her eyes to his, suddenly knew what he meant, and was aware that she could no longer press to be taken into his home. It was a thrilling moment for both, and when it had passed, the world was changed. But the next word said was a commonplace reminder from Mildred that it was high time for Heber and herself to dress for dinner.

Mildred consented to wait for the Christmas party, and afterwards she was to be allowed to flit to the cottage her son had prepared for her. While the arrangements for the party were pending Emmeline resolved to strike a blow in the interests of herself and her son. She took occasion to find her cousin Jim alone, and spoke with admiration of a remarkably fine jewel which had just come to him by post, and which he was examining with much evident satisfaction.

"Is it not rare?" he said, holding the aqua marine

to the light. "Fit to sparkle on a fair young throat, Cousin Emmeline."

"Ah, Jim!" cried the lady, forgetting the prudent approach she had marked out for herself, "are you not losing your good sense in giving such encouragement to this artful young woman?"

Lord Gytrash looked at her with a queer smile as he restored the jewel to its case.

"I intend to give her every encouragement," he said.

"So I perceive. But if it be not too late, and it cannot be too late surely, let a friend warn you, if you are bent on marrying, not to give up your liberty to so young and designing a person——"

"It is neither too late nor too early for such an excellent piece of advice," said his lordship. "But I assure you that, though I may not possess all the good sense you could wish, I am keen enough to see through such a person as you describe."

"Then you have no intention of marrying the Lady Honoria?"

"None," he said, smiling. "I gave up all intentions of marrying many years ago——"

"Ah, through my fault! If you could allow me to make amends, even now, for the injury I did you."

"You cannot make amends, madam, for an injury you never did me. I am a free man, and I enjoy my freedom. As for the Lady Honoria——"

"Yes?" said Emmeline quickly, raising her face from her pocket-handkerchief.

"I intend to make her my daughter and heiress. She shall not marry till she finds a man her equal in youth as well as in other such qualities as shall attract her

noble heart and mind. And she shall not be expected to marry at all unless it pleases her."

Emmeline was silent under the shock of this amazing piece of information.

"Well, madam, are you satisfied now of the nature of my feelings and intentions towards this young girl who has excited your envy and jealousy?"

"Oh, my cousin," cried Emmeline, melting into tears, "why are you so harsh to one who is devoted to you? Must I remind you that there are others of your kindred who are as worthy of your notice as this girl on whom you are lavishing everything? My son is your relative also, as closely related to you as the daughter of the Earl of Finbarr. His father was your cousin also——"

"I am aware of it, madam, and I have expected that you would introduce the young man to me. Neither he nor I can tell why you have not done so."

"He?" cried Emmeline.

"I have been to visit him at his college, and he is a fine fellow enough. I have taken the liberty of inviting him here for Christmas."

Emmeline was so stricken that she was scarcely able to murmur her thanks. She retired in a state of mental confusion, wondering what his lordship had meant by going to see Rolf at the college without telling her of his intention. As for his calling him a fine fellow, a jest or a jeer might be under the complimentary words.

True, she had not seen her boy for a considerable time, and the development she had hoped for might have taken place. It was something to know that he was to be of the Christmas house party, without any management being necessary on her part.

That some benefit should result from his visit, to her-

self and to him, she was resolved. If Cousin Jim was in earnest, and nobody was destined to become Lady Gytrash, then measures must be taken to baffle his intention of making Lady Honoria his daughter and heiress. Failing her, there was only Rolf to fall back upon. These low-class O'Donovans were soon to quit the scene. Doubtless Jim had at last become aware of his folly in encouraging their pretensions, and had warned them off. If Honoria, who appeared to be extraordinarily attached to them, might also be dismissed, or induced to depart with them, then, indeed, what a future would open up before herself and Rolf!

Several questions remained to be answered. Was Gytrash really prepossessed in favour of her son, or was he only fooling her? Had he actually gone to see Rolf at his college without saying a word to her about it? And if he had paid the visit, why had not Rolf himself written to apprise her of an occurrence so all-important? True, she had not written to the boy for a considerable time. Her mind had been occupied with plans and hopes on other lines for his welfare. It was a fact that she had wished, for sensible reasons, to keep him a little longer in the background. Now, however, she must consider that his moment had come—that was, in case the eccentric Gytrash had not made his surprising announcement from sheer delight at seeing her astonishment, and leading her all astray in her expectations. Oh, what a spite it was to have to reckon with a person who was so fond of indulging in reckless jeers and jokes!

If she could only ask advice of Carrie! But India was inconveniently far away for such a proceeding. Letters were so slow, and telegrams were so expensive,

besides being too public for the discussion of matters of particular delicacy.

There was nothing to be done but to await the untying of the knot by Rolf's arrival, or by his failure to appear. She wondered what might be the condition of the boy's wardrobe. There would be no time now for enquiries and replenishments, for Gytrash had named an early day for his coming. Had he outgrown his evening suit, or had he failed to realize his promise of running to more than average inches?

With a sigh she acknowledged that there was nothing further she could do at the moment to promote his welfare, and went to try on the dress from Paris, which had arrived in a box suggestive of millinerial perfection by reason of its dimensions and the instructions to possibly careless carriers inscribed on its covering.

"There can be no doubt," she reflected, as she saw herself in her looking-glass, newly clad in glory, "no denying, that I am still an attractive woman. But to what avail? Will Rolf arrive looking so manly as to add years to his mother's age? If so, it will be the last drop of bitterness in my personal cup. But if I needs must abdicate, let me hope that it will at least be in favour of my son, and no other."

Having arrived at this point, she bethought her of the advisability of preparing the Major for the appearance of the young kinsman who was destined for a military career, and ought to be the more interesting to an old soldier on that account. So she went off to his rooms and played a game of chess with him, and allowed herself to be beaten.

The Major was much aged and depressed in speech and manner. He lay in his long chair, his injured back

supported by cushions, a table by his side, with books and games of various kinds at hand to beguile an invalid's tedious hours.

"Dear Cousin," began Emmeline, having first declared herself badly beaten——

"Humph!" said the Major, "we may as well omit the 'dear'. What does it mean at the present moment, Mrs. Turbary?"

Though the Major was a good deal subdued, yet Emmeline's bursts of affection had upon him something of the effect of a trumpet upon an old war horse.

"You are so droll, Major! Of course it means my great regard. None of us can afford to dispense with friendship. I was going to tell you that my darling boy, my Rolf, the son of your cousin who is, alas! no more, is coming to-morrow to join our Christmas house party."

"What is bringing him here?" growled the Major.

"Oh, cousin! Of course he is coming by invitation of Lord Gytrash."

"I am sorry to hear it," said the Major. "There are too many of us about this place already. I don't know what Gytrash means by gathering in such a crowd of his pauper relations. I, for one, don't intend to be a burthen to him much longer. Here, Kerrigan! Have we had any reply to that letter of enquiry about decent lodgings in London?"

CHAPTER XXXIII

Tea in Her Hat

THE house party assembled and was pretty numerous, with a good deal of variety in the character of the guests.

Some of Emmeline's old acquaintances appeared among the guests, including the neglected poet, the psychic researcher, and the cynical novelist. Three distinguished ladies, an astrologer, a leader of suffragettes, and a crystal-gazing baroness were among the earliest to arrive; while Honoria looked with interest for Lady Harriet Western and her daughter, who were due at tea-time. Honoria had never yet made the acquaintance of any girls except the children of the cabins on the Connaught foreshore, and there was some excitement for her in the prospect of quite a new experience.

The big hall at Tam Towers is one of the finest of its kind in England, and looks its best perhaps when the huge ingle is filled with blazing logs, lamp and fire lighting up the tall screens of bronze and gold Venetian leather, the dark carvings and the old portraits, and the great jars of flowers, and shining on the china and silver of the afternoon tea-table.

No wonder if Emmeline preferred this sort of thing to Glyn Castle. At present she sat near Honoria, conveying to her, as well as silence can convey anything,

that she was conscious of the wrong done her, Emmeline, as an elder of the family and a matron of world-wide travel and social experience, seeing that a chit from the wilds of Connaught was established in her place there as mistress absolute, and dispenser of his lordship's hospitalities.

Honoria was well aware of the cold wind blowing on her from that quarter, but she was feeling too warm and healthy in heart and limb to heed it. The fullness of the moment to her meant standing near Heber, and Ethelind Western just arriving. Here she was, that new creature, the girl of her own age about whom she had, with all her other excitements, found time to be curious.

The Westerns came in, Lady Western murmuring of a great shock and a fatal motor accident that very nearly happened. Ettie (as her friends called her) said she would have her tea in her hat, and threw off her fur coat, appearing like an unfledged little bird, in a frock of gold colour that looked like feathery down sheathing her round, symmetrical little body. There was something bird-like even in the set and quick movements of her small, round head, covered with short dark curls, the only remaining trace of a recent illness; and in the glance of her keen bright eyes. Some people said that Ettie's eyes were "beady", but that could only be imagined by envy when they were sparkling with fun, for they could be very soft and tender when occasion required, or when spontaneous good feeling affected them. She hastened to Honoria at once, looking at her delightedly, with a glance that was perfectly well-bred though comprehensive, seeing her from the top of the hair that was too full of the sun for Emmeline's en-

durance to the hem of her gown of pearl-coloured soft silk, and taking in the details of sweet, serious eyes and a cluster of brilliant chrysanthemums worn—somewhere between brow and bosom.

After the first words and the first cup of tea Ettie whispered:

"Oh, I am so glad you are nice!"

Honoria lit up with a little amused laugh.

"Am I nice? Were you afraid I might not be nice?"

"Somebody said something that made me afraid. Who was it, I wonder? No matter."

She had glanced towards Mrs. Turbary, but withdrew her eyes immediately.

"I am glad you've made up your mind. I never had any doubt of you."

"Well, then, we are friends," said Ettie, "and let us talk about everything. Do you golf, do you play bridge——?"

"I am learning golf, but I hate bridge——"

"Oh! Mother doesn't like me to learn bridge, so I was anxious to learn it. But if you hate it, I won't. Besides, it will go out of fashion, Mother says, and then I should have lost the time I might have spent on a more permanent accomplishment. Do you play music?"

"Only on the Irish harp."

"Do you sing?"

"Only as the larks do in Connaught. You must remember that I am a bog-trotter."

"How lovely! And you were never at school?"

"Never."

"Nor had a governess?"

"I had two dear teachers, but never a governess. So you see what a peculiar friend you are taking to yourself."

"Delightful! I'm always a little at a loss with perfectly grown-up, finished girls. They are so knowing, and so scornful of my small experiences. They say I have been kept corked up in cotton wool like a tabloid in a bottle——"

Honoria laughed. "I can't say I have been corked up, but rather left loose," she said. "But as extremes meet——"

"We shall understand each other?"

"I think we shall."

"You are the very kind of girl I have been longing for," said Ettie, "only I didn't believe you existed—judging by what I was told. Begin now by telling me who these people are. That's Mother, of course, and the lady with her is Mrs. Turbary, who was so nice to Grandmother a year ago about her Egyptian village. Mother thinks she encouraged her too much with sympathy. She says it is a foolish undertaking to squander useful money. I think it is great fun. Now, who is the old gentleman resting in the long chair?"

"That is Major Turbary."

"And who is that graceful lady in black, with a white lace scarf or something, and the Madonna countenance?"

"That is Mrs. O'Donovan, an Irish lady."

"I see a lot of men whom I don't care to know anything about till time develops them into named individuals, perhaps with characters. Characters as a rule do not interest me; I like pleasant people."

"So do I," said Honoria.

"But who are those two nice boys who are standing together, looking at us as if they would like to get into the conversation?"

"The dark, taller one is Heber O'Donovan, a friend of ours; the other is my cousin, Rolf Turbary."

"Another Turbary! Lord Gytrash is a Turbary, isn't he?"

"His mother was."

"So you are a quantity of cousins altogether?"

"Of different sorts and degrees," said Honoria, laughing.

"And your father was the Earl of Finbarr who was lost in a Polar expedition?"

"I hope not," said Honoria hastily. "He is the Earl of Finbarr, and I believe he will return——"

"Oh, I am so sorry I said it! I do hope he will come back. Somebody said——"

Again Ettie glanced towards Mrs. Emmeline and her mother. Mrs. Turbary was talking volubly, and Lady Western was looking bored. After all that, Ettie thought she had had enough tea in her hat, and consented to a break in the conversation, to be thoroughly well mended at dinner-time.

A quarter of an hour before dinner was quite enough to make Ettie happily at home with the two nice boys, who looked so pleasant and were pretty safe to have no characters. She was paired away with Rolf, the new cousin Turbary; Lord Gytrash led in Lady Western; and the others fell into order according to their rank or importance, or to the freakish design of the host, who could never be relied upon to be in serious earnest beyond a certain incalculable point.

He could do the correct thing in the most unexceptionable manner, or he could lapse into mistakes that might be taken as practical jokes by the stickler for conventional propriety.

It was the freak of his lordship at the moment to bestow Mrs. Turbary on Heber O'Donovan, keeping an occasional eye on the young man to see how the grit with which he credited him would behave under the circumstances, and whether a sufficient sense of humour would steer him and Emmeline, aboard the same ship, through narrow and difficult passages. Ettie soon decided that her partner was the less clever of the two nice boys whom she had hastily classed together. Heber was clever, and would find her out immediately. She would be afraid to prattle to him at close quarters without someone at hand to be a makeweight as a balance between two unequal intelligences. Rolf was "nice", looked like one who wouldn't care for books, whether ancient or modern in thought or language; wouldn't care for any of the "ologies", nor for the law in any form; but could read and discuss a good novel, carry a sword, and look well in a uniform. She had, by some rapid, mysterious process, learned of his military destination, and of Heber's mechanical genius; and had decided which of these masculine spirits would assimilate best with her own natural proclivities. Even Rolf's fair locks gave her better promise of understanding than the dark, close-cut hair, fitting like a cap, above Heber's square brows. She did not think that her own dark crop of little waves and curls denoted unusual strength of character, or alarming severity of judgment, for in her own case it was merely the suiting of the colour of hair to the tone of complexion, and quite a

different thing in a woman, for whom looks were, after all, the only thing very important.

Honoria had been mated for the hour with a young baronet of substantial property, who had been trying to approach her all the afternoon, and was too much overwhelmed with fascination to find many words to say now that he was seated beside her. She was thus thrown for conversation a good deal on her other neighbour, the cynical novelist, who was fitting her into his next book as a wrecker of men's lives and a destroyer of another woman's home. Opposite to her the neglected poet was placing her somewhere in his future works as Helen of Troy, while a rising artist was thinking it very probable that Lord Gytrash might be willing to give an order for a portrait of his beautiful ward, and was already trying to see over the heads of the crowd that would be sure to gather round it on the day of the opening of the next Royal Academy Exhibition. He would have to work very hard at it to be ready in time; but then, with such a subject the brush might do miracles.

On the other side of the novelist the suffragette lady was mildly, and with heroic persistence, trying to make a convert of the author of *A Woman in the Thirties*, the meaning of which title was known to be that women between the ages of thirty and forty do all the mischief that is done in the world. Honoria and Ettie might still have a harmless race to run before thoroughly entering on active operations, but the lady suffragette was in the full current of the dangerous period. The cynical fictionist was evidently on his guard against her insidious attempts at wickedness, however, and devoted himself to the study of the more

attractive type represented by Honoria, who might still be in ignorance of the destiny that was in store for her.

One happy hit was made by the host in pairing the crystal-reading lady with the psychic researcher, whose interesting intercommunications were carried on in the drawing-room, whither the man of ghostly experience, the poet, the artist, and the two nice boys, with the shy and overwhelmed young baronet, all followed the ladies precipitately, leaving the less impressionable and more seasoned persons to their smoke and their wine.

At bed-time, when the party was breaking up for the night, his lordship drew Heber into his own particular "den".

"I've had a letter from your people," he said. "You've got a lot to tell me."

So Heber had, and his eyes shone in telling it.

"They've tested and approved the plan," he said, "and the ship is to be built."

His friend laughed, questioned, jeered, and laughed again.

"So you think you are going to cut out all the crack-brained highflyers, and sail over their heads!" he said.

"We shall see," said Heber.

"You are a conceited young jackanapes," said his lordship, "but I like your pluck."

The talk about possibilities and impossibilities in the management of the air lasted far into the small hours of the morning.

"You think you can make a slave of the fellow who has been master—bridle the winds, put harness on the wild horses that ride the clouds and trample the earth, and make them carry you where you will!"

"Not exactly that," said Heber, "but we will ride with them and through them, and in spite of them."

"Well, my boy, your optimism is a splendid thing. I suppose I am too elderly and heavy to believe that wings can ever grow out of human shoulders. I may be a slow coach and a stick-in-the-mud, but all I can say is, don't come to me for pity when your neck is broken."

CHAPTER XXXIV

Rolf on the Scene

EMMELINE, despite her efforts to assert her own importance, and the workings of her natural self-complacency, was a little at a discount in the company. Lady Western, whom she wished to claim as her natural affinity, took her raptures about the dear Duchess and Egypt rather coldly, and preferred to amuse herself with the crystal-gazing and astrology of some of the other ladies. Her old acquaintance, the author of *A Woman in the Thirties*, was her best friend among the men, as he looked on her as being long past the mischievous age, and perfectly innocuous, as well as a receptive listener not easily startled by his theories. She had, however, a good deal of time on her hands, and devoted it to thinking out schemes for her own benefit, and to the solace of letter-writing to "Carrie" in India.

"So you will see, dear friend," she wrote, "that although poor Emmeline is relieved on some points, she is still full of anxiety about important matters of which, alas! she is not allowed to have the management. True, Rolf is here, and Gytrash seems to have taken him up, though he does not take him aside and talk to him privately as he does to that Heber O'Donovan. He just tells me he is 'a good chap, and will do', and lets him go in the crowd. The boy is

a fine fellow, and my fears about his wardrobe have not been realized. He is well dressed, and I suspect Gytrash thought of that too when he invited him. A cheque to him in a letter is no more than an ordinary postscript to you or me. I can't say my son is particularly attentive or affectionate to his mother. He is not disrespectful, but, for instance, when I complained, he said: 'Well, you know, Mother, I never have been much accustomed to you!' No more he has.

"What could I have done with a great boy always hanging about me? However, here he is, and he seems to be popular in the company. That he makes me older cannot be denied, though that odious Kerrigan, with his usual vulgar jocosity, had the impertinence to turn the matter another way, for the purpose of annoying me, of course. I was coming up the stairs, and I heard him say on the landing above to one of the maids:

"'To think of madam having a son as young as that fine boy, Misther Rolf! I thought it would have been an old bachelor kind of a fellow she would bring on us!'

"Of course, he knew I was on the stairs. The idea of me being the mother of an old bachelor! It shows you what I have to endure. But such insolence is of no consequence. I am looking my best in the new evening dress, and Gytrash is paying for it.

"The Major is getting horrid, more and more. Fancy his complaining of so many 'pauper relations' being harboured by Gytrash at Tam Towers! I, at least, am not a pauper, nor is my son. We have a nice little income, out of which I save something by

economy. So the Major has nobody to grumble about except himself and Kerrigan. And even he (Turbary) has a little annuity, and talks about flitting to lodgings in London, which I heartily wish he may do, but I doubt it.

"There remains only the Lady Honoria as a perfectly penniless relative. And that, dear Carrie, brings me to a point of interest in my confidences to you.

"It came to me as a light the other night, in the small hours, after a very vexatious evening, that things were drifting away from me, and I must do something to pull them together. If Cousin Jim is determined not to marry, and this girl is to be his heiress, and he is taking a little interest in my son, why, then, not marry Rolf to the Lady Honoria? It would keep everything in the family. Rolf will be in the army; and Colonel and the Lady Honoria Turbary will sound well, or, meanwhile, Captain, or even Lieutenant, and the Lady Honoria Turbary, with, by the way, a million or two to their credit!

"Of course I have hated the girl, but that was when she was an obstacle in my way, and as my daughter-in-law she would be my own property, and the case would be different. She is really very handsome and amiable and clever, and for a soldier, you know, especially in a crack regiment (and Gytrash will not, I am sure, consent to any other), to have a wife with a title, and a style equal to the taking up of any position, is an extra feather in his cap, as I need hardly tell you. So you see I have, after all, arranged matters to come round very nicely. Gytrash may not see it all at once, but I shall know how to work upon him,

I know he believes that she is fancy free. There is a young baronet here, Sir Fulke Fulke, who is devoted, and perfectly eligible; and I hinted to Gytrash. But he smiled and said:

"'Noreen is not thinking about that sort of thing. She shall not be disturbed. Let us allow her her first years of youth and freedom!'

"So my plan is to draw the young people together. Honoria has taken very well to Rolf from the first; calls him 'Cousin', and helps him out of his shyness, which indeed he is beginning to shake off. I have already changed my manner to her, and am growing quite affectionate.

"'My dear,' I said to her this morning, 'I am grateful to you for being so nice to my poor Rolf.'

She laughed. And she has such pretty teeth to show! Now that I look on her as my own I can see all her good points.

"'Why poor?' she said. 'He is a charming fellow, and we are cousins. He is nice to me, and of course I am nice to him.'

"So, you see, things are in a fair way. Gytrash has not spoken against it, and Honoria is amiable. There is every opportunity for the cousins to become attached to each other's society. The young people are together all day. They golf and skate as long as there is daylight, and then there are the long evenings with music, and dancing, and singing, and chattering. The only thing that disturbs me is a doubt—merely a faint doubt—of whether Rolf himself may prove amenable to reason and obedient to his mother, and, above all, sufficiently alive to his own interests. You will say that I am growing nervous and over-anxious, and I confess I am of rather

a supersensitive organization where delicate matters are concerned, but you shall judge of the circumstances for yourself.

"I mentioned to you the dear Duchess of Doldrums, now in Egypt, and her daughter Lady Harriet Western, at present of our party, and her daughter, Ethelind Western, a pretty girl of eighteen, who is one of the young people enjoying themselves here, as I have just described to you.

"From the first I have foreseen that something might come of Rolf's visit, might happen to influence our fortunes one way or another. After I had seen Ettie (as they call her) and heard her chatter (she is very lively, and boys like that sort of thing, especially quiet boys like Rolf), I took occasion to say a timely word to Gytrash. I merely said:

"'These Westerns are agreeable people.'

"'Yes,' he answered.

"'The girl is pretty.'

"'Yes.' Not another word. It wasn't very encouraging, but you know my courage.

"'Lord Western is——'

"'Not a very prudent man,' he said. 'Turfy, and——'

"No more. But I understood.

"'Where is he now?' I asked.

"'Monte Carlo,' said Jim, and shrugged his shoulders.

"'Then I conclude,' I said, 'that this poor child Ethelind will have very little fortune?'

"'Her mother has a trifle,' he said, 'but Lady Harriet is comparatively a young woman. Miss Ethelind must stand on her own pretty feet, I imagine.'

"It was enough, was it not, Carrie? It was after that I transferred my attentions to the Lady Honoria. A

marriage without money would be ruinous for Rolf. The army requires capital. I have seen something of penniless titles, and they fill me with disgust.

"And now my uneasiness comes in. It seems to me that Miss Ettie has taken amazingly to Rolf, and that Rolf is more attracted to her than to his cousin. It is easy to see that a catastrophe might occur unless timely interference should come to the rescue. I have now to consider what form that interference ought to take."

Here a break occurred in Emmeline's letter, which was not finished and posted till some ten days later. Meanwhile the golfing, and skating, and singing, and dancing, and chattering went on among the young ones; while the elders gossiped, and lounged, and pottered, and fed on rich food, and played bridge, and were driven in motors. The very cream of prosperity was on the surface of life for all, and the young, at least, did not trouble their heads as to how soon it might be skimmed, leaving nothing for them but the skim-milk of adversity, or of something approaching to that dreaded eventuality.

However, one mother's eye was on the progress of things, and Mrs. Turbary feared that she saw Rolf going headlong to destruction, led like a little dog on a string to the very verge of a precipice by the wilful little hand of Miss Ettie Western. Something must be done; and after several wakeful nights Mrs. Turbary made up her mind to her course of action. No use remonstrating with Rolf. It was a cruel fact that she had not that authority over her son which is known to be a mother's prerogative. To work on Honoria through her own interests was the best means of righting matters. She would make another appeal to Lord

Gytrash to influence Honoria, and she must do it with a little more art than on a former occasion. The success of her effort was recounted in the conclusion of her letter to "Carrie".

"I have done it!" she wrote. "I began by delicately suggesting to Jim that I had penetrated to the womanly heart of his favourite, Noreen, and surprised her secret.

"He looked astonished, but I was prepared for that. I knew I had scored when I found that he did not jeer.

"'She fears,' I said, 'that you will disapprove because Rolf and she are cousins.'

"'I should never have guessed it,' he said.

"'Ah! trust a woman for finding out the heart of a woman,' was my answer.

"'I did not know that you and she were such intimate friends,' he said. 'Indeed, I always understood that you disliked her.'

"I was prepared for that.

"'And pray, Cousin Jim, whose was the fault in that matter? Until I came under this roof with her I was not allowed to know her.'

"'True,' he said, 'and she repays the trouble of a great deal of knowing. And now, pray, Mrs. Turbary——'

"'Oh, do call me Emmeline!' I said.

"That was a slight mistake, I fear, for he gave me one of his queer smiles for the first time during the conversation, and a little air of his usual suspicion crept over him.

"'What's in a name?' he said. 'Tell me what you want me to do in this matter, madam?"

"'Only to let Honoria know that you are willing she should marry her cousin, Rolf Turbary.'

"'I see,' he said. 'It shall be done.'

"Now, my dear Carrie, you will agree that I have acted wisely. The girl will never be so silly as to risk displeasing Lord Gytrash, and being deprived, perhaps, of his favour as his heiress; and she will so behave towards Rolf as to save him from the pitfall towards which he has been hastening. She is a person of character, capable of decision, and she must be aware of her fitness for power. She would not be likely to cut herself off from a future which would give her that power. At present she exercises on many people a wonderful fascination, apparently without effort, and if she chose to use it deliberately for a purpose, she could twist anyone round her finger, let alone poor, simple Rolf!

"As for Miss Ettie, she will flirt with anybody, I believe, and at the worst she will never break her heart so long as the world is full of new toys to amuse her."

CHAPTER XXXV

"A Universal Grandfather"

MRS. TURBARY made a fairly good guess when she decided that Lord Gytrash was favourably impressed by her suggestion of a marriage between Rolf and Honoria. Such matchmaking would never have occurred to him, but the idea, once put in his mind, took a reasonable appearance, and he saw little objection to it. He had adopted Noreen with the heart which was the true centre of a whimsical nature, and he had a serious intention of making her his heiress. Rolf, though also of his own kin, was a person for secondary consideration; but no doubt the marriage of these young people would enable him to benefit both, as well as to set up the family name.

The more he thought of it the more pleased he became with the idea. Mrs. Turbary was a foolish woman, but after all she was a mother, and might be excused for some ambition for her son. She had kept him in the background long enough, and when he, Gytrash, had gone to look him up, he had expected to find him an exceptionally stupid fellow, if not a semi-idiot, and ill-behaved. True, he was rather dull, but Honoria was bright enough in herself to illuminate the firm of Turbary and Turbary. He would give the young people every opportunity of approaching nearer to each other, but

Honoria should choose for herself. He quite discounted Emmeline's suggestion that the girl had already thought of marriage with her cousin, and feared his disapproval. It was only one of her highly-coloured views of things, which had to be well washed with common sense before you could perceive what they might be supposed to represent. But no doubt Honoria had been ready and frank with her friendship, and had extended a cousinly hand to her young kinsman. If more were to come of it, well and good; let it be so. But he would not allow matters to be hurried.

The Christmas party was coming to an end, but that was of small consequence. Rolf should be invited to return whenever he pleased. Meanwhile the young people had seemed to their host to be all very happy together. No need to be guessing which liked which better than anybody else. Now that his attention had been called to it, he seemed to perceive that Miss Ettie took a large share of Rolf to herself, and that the youth bestowed himself on her willingly. Honoria, being his cousin, was, of course, to be taken for granted as a friend, and the attentions of a stranger might be more flattering for the moment. Lord Gytrash smiled as he remembered Emmeline's solicitude as to the financial status of the Westerns, and how quickly she accepted his mischievous hint as to Ethelind's lack of fortune. Family alone, without large fortune, would not be satisfactory to Mrs. Turbary. Yet she was willing to take a risk in the case of Honoria. What if he, Gytrash, were to wash his hands of the future of the daughter of the Earl of Finbarr? He had been reported freakish, as millionaires sometimes considered they had a right to be.

It will be seen that his lordship was, unperceived by himself, becoming quite a family man, in his interested thoughts about the young people whom he found thrown on his hands.

"It is well," he said to himself, finishing his cigar as he sat alone in his "den", when something of the above suggestion crossed his mind. "There comes a time when a man wants to be occupied less with himself and more with the young around him. Better be concerned about somebody's children than nobody's children. An old bachelor may as well begin to be a universal grandfather before a lonely old age overtakes him."

The house party broke up. The Major and Kerrigan departed, despite the remonstrances of the host, and took up their quarters in rooms near the Old Soldiers' Military Club. Mrs. O'Donovan and her son were established in a cottage as near as possible to the engineering works where Heber was now in receipt of a salary sufficient for the modest maintenance of his mother and himself. Rolf had returned to his college, and the Westerns, like the other guests, had gone back to their own routine of social life, Ettie being on the eve of presentation at Court, and all the excitements that, for a girl, follow on such an experience.

There remained only Mrs. Turbary and Honoria as recipients of his lordship's hospitality at Tam Towers.

Emmeline was much discontented at seeing Rolf depart without anything for his future having been arranged, the cousins parting on friendly and even affectionate terms, but without seeming at all troubled by the separation.

"Take time, take time!" said his lordship, and Emmeline was somewhat consoled by an invitation to remain at the Towers as chaperon to Honoria, who was to be presented at Court along with Ethelind Western, Mrs. Turbary's only objection being that she herself was not to present her.

"It is rather hard," she wrote to "Carrie", "seeing that I was presented myself many years ago, and am quite eligible. Though I may not be as prominent in society at present as Lady Western, I think some consideration was due to the fact that I am the future mother-in-law of the Lady Honoria. And how well the Court dress would have suited me; plumes and a train are so becoming to my style!"

She enjoyed the visit to London necessitated by this event, however, and after it was over she returned willingly to her comfortable quarters at the Towers, and to the airs of authority and affectionate ownership which she now assumed to her prospective daughter-in-law. And then things went on pretty well till Lord Gytrash began to feel a little at a loss to know what to do with the two women on whom he was bestowing his bounty. It was easy enough to get on with the girl, for between the library and the garden she was always able to occupy herself happily. But Emmeline, with nothing to do, with no party in the house to keep her small wits superficially engaged, and with unsatisfied ambition always seething in the conversations which she thrust on her cousin Jim when she followed him into his "den" with praises of Rolf and speculations about Honoria—she was a more difficult person to deal with. He began to reflect that he would not himself have liked Mrs Turbary as a

mother-in-law, and to reproach himself for having rashly agreed to aid and abet her in obtaining Noreen as a wife for Rolf.

He had, however, given a certain promise. "Take time, take time!" he repeated to himself, and resolved to give the young people a proper opportunity.

Meanwhile, Rolf was in an unfinished state as to his manhood and his profession, and Honoria, fancy free, was so delightful a creature in the house of her protector, now for the first time a home, that his lordship allowed Mrs. Turbary to talk greed and selfishness by the hour, and to take to herself a certain amount of authority and consideration from his visitors and from his household.

No one but Mildred O'Donovan knew how Honoria was affected by the ways of her chaperon, whom she treated with proper respect up to a certain point, and for the rest with good-humoured indifference.

"She is so funny," wrote Noreen to Mildred, "with her little vanities and pretensions, that one can hardly be vexed with her. And oh, how she does enjoy the good table! It amuses Uncle Jim (so he bids me call him now) to see her. He wonders she doesn't die of *pâté de foie gras* on top of pastry. It is a pity when people who can feast untiringly on such things are poor. But Cousin Emmeline, as I address her now, is at present in a corner of the world that suits her. I am glad she is happy, of course, but what, I wonder, is the cause of her change of manner towards myself? It is pleasant when people are nice to you, instead of as disagreeable as they can manage to be; but I would rather have a real friendliness in homespun, than flattery in rags with a lining of enmity shining through the rifts. But this is

bad talk. Poor Mrs. Turbary is evidently glad that his lordship has taken Rolf by the hand. I fancy she was once jealous that I was getting all the good things, and now that her boy is having a share she no longer hates me. Rolf is a dear, good fellow and I am very fond of him. He comes here, as you know, whenever he has a few days' holiday. Others besides ourselves can see his good qualities. The Westerns have also made a favourite of him. Ettie writes to me from time to time, and tells me she is thoroughly enjoying herself as a debutante in London. For me, I had enough of it. Nothing imaginable could be more delicious than the gardens, now that the spring flowers are waking into life. We did not know much about flowers in dear old Glyn. But oh, our mountains, and our great rolling ocean, where have they vanished to, and shall they know us no more? What good days Heber and I had on the rocks, working at the models! I know his lordship is greatly pleased that Heber is so much valued at the works, and though he laughs about the airship, he evidently expects something to surprise the world. You know, I always believed in the thing that is coming, and it will be a wonderful thing when it comes.

"I am glad you see Mr. Ferrall sometimes. I owe him a debt of gratitude which I can never repay or forget. I always think of him in a special manner when Uncle Jim talks of taking me a trip to the cities of Europe. Only for him and you how ignorant I should be! Will you tell him I am not neglecting my opportunities here, where I find the library a perfect treasure-house? I am so glad I know something of French, German, and Italian. French will be par-

ticularly necessary if our travels ever really come off, and it is well that some French people have been among our week-end visitors lately, giving me practice in speaking the language."

Soon after this letter was written the foreign trip was really arranged to come off. In a happy moment his lordship had bethought him of such a means of spending a few months pleasantly for himself, and profitably for Honoria. Emmeline on her travels would perhaps be less burdensome as a companion than Emmeline at the Towers, especially when no guests happened to be in the place, and she was fain to bestow herself by the hour on her cousin Jim in his sanctum.

Honoria's next letter to Mildred reported the near approach of the departure of a party from Tam Towers to Paris, on the way to many delightful spots of the earth.

"Mrs. Turbary is almost as gay over the matter as myself," she wrote; "the only drawback to her joy being his lordship's refusal to make Rolf one of the party. He considers that my cousin ought to stay at his college, but will allow him to join us somewhere later on, if he can get a holiday. With this his mother tries to be content, and her travelling trousseau occupies her most of the time, and helps her to be reconciled to the inevitable.

"There are only two drawbacks to my own perfect happiness. One is that I shall be so much farther away from your cottage, and the other that we shall miss so much of the beauty of the garden during our absence. You probably remember flowers in your youth, but to me they are a revelation. The gardener tells me, however, that there will be even greater splendour in store for us on our return in the late summer."

CHAPTER XXXVI

"Better Soar, Even to Fall"

HEBER was looking lean and worn with long hours of labour at the works—at it from six till six, and sometimes back again from eight in the evening till four in the morning, when something important was to be tested.

He was not so busy, however, but that he had time to be jealous of Rolf.

"Noreen is drifting away from us," he said to his mother, after reading one of the letters that poured in to Mildred from every stage of the girl's delightful travels.

"Is she?" said Mildred, smiling. "I don't see it. These letters are hardly a proof. Noreen will never forget her oldest friends."

Heber sighed impatiently, threw on his hat, and went out. His mother's allusion to "friends" did not satisfy him. Her manner of taking him on the subject of Noreen never did satisfy him, and Mildred did not intend that it should. She did not want her clever son to waste himself with hopes that were very unlikely to be realized. Honoria was now fairly launched in a world in which she and Heber could have no part. Noreen was young, beautiful, warm-hearted and imaginative. In the society to which Lord Gytrash would introduce her, some brilliant personality would be pretty sure

to attract her; and that such an attraction should prove a worthy one was to be prayed for. Mildred could see nothing but trouble for Heber likely to arise from his imperious maintenance of a claim upon Honoria as a possession altogether his own.

Heber meanwhile set his teeth in determination to run a race with unlikelihoods, and win on both sides. He would conquer the winds, and he would win Honoria. He had never let go his faith in the power that would cut the knot of distance between Norway and the highest North, of navigating the whole of the air that circumferates this globe, and of folding his wings when he pleased on any frozen spot where the penguins alighted, and why not he?

He would prowl about the icefields like the white bears, search the hills and crevices of those regions, and find some trace of Noreen's father, as he had promised her to do.

Would Rolf Turbary, with his smooth face and his languid aspirations for warfare, attempt as much to woo her? And if that mild young soldier were to carry her off meanwhile to be a feather in a military cap at one station after another of a standing British army—why, then, there must still be for Heber the fight with the air, and the tracts of the mysterious icefields, where many a courageous man would yet find death, like many another who had dared it before him.

Heber did not utter all these resolves into his mother's ear. A certain little indulgent smile in the eyes of love she would turn on him unconsciously warned him off. In that smile he saw the sweetness of unutterable sympathy, but none of the imprudence of unhesitating faith. And in the present mood of his

imperious youth he would rather have had the faith than the sympathy.

But nothing mattered except the work and the thing that was to come of it. Every day wings were being unfurled, and sailed away over his head. It would be wrong to say that Heber was glad when the imperfection of one "voler" after another was proved to the world imperfect, quite mistaken to imagine he rejoiced to hear that an aeronaut had been dropped in the sea, or smashed under his "plane", or strangled by his gear, or had arrived in a hurry, maimed, at a place he had never steered for. But all these daily happenings assured him that a secret was yet to be made known that would put an end to such fatalities, and he believed that he had got the secret. It was shared already by the builders, who had undertaken to materialize a subtle idea, and to exploit the result.

On this subject of his ambition and his confidence in success he talked freely to his mother and to Mr. Ferrall, who came to the cottage pretty often on evenings when Heber was free, and usually on Sundays. Mr. Ferrall was living now in London, engaged in authorship, and as usual pursuing an ideal of his own, which was far from likely to requite him in any practical manner. At present he was writing a treatise on Irish bogs, their cause, development, and ultimate conditions, dwelling on the part which vast coalfields would play in the wealthy and prosperous Ireland of a far-off futurity. He had made several trips to Glyn since the catastrophe had desolated the place, to study the causes of the bog slide and its consequences. Of these studies of Nature he spoke largely, but said little about the help he had given to the sufferers from the misfortune caused by

Nature's progress, or the interest he had taken in their fate; only just enough to satisfy the anxious enquiries of his friends. His own little lodge, his "snail-shell" as he had called it, was in ruins. If the book on the bogs should prove a success he might rebuild it. But where is the public who would read enough about Irish bogs to pay for mortar to set up walls, even of granite ready to hand, on a Connaught foreshore?

There was a little rustic, hooded veranda to Mildred's cottage, which was one of those small, old-time dwellings of a humble class, seemingly left behind and forgotten, in the neighbourhood of a suburb with newer and less new terraces, and roads to other and outlying minor Londons of the greatest main of London. In the shelter of this nook, with the near, mighty traffic sounding in their ears, slightly muffled like the rolling of distant thunder, Heber and his friend and master would sit and smoke together on the early summer evenings, while Mildred was preparing the supper. And these two, of different generations, who had lived their lives so keenly together on the fringe of the ocean in Connaught, now lived it as keenly, and in as close touch, here where the ocean at their feet was the ocean of crowding souls, its waves the onrush of human feet, the trampling of horses' feet, and the grinding of wheels; its murmur the hum of innumerable human voices.

"How soon do you expect to make a trial trip?" asked Ferrall, having listened to a vivid description from Heber of the gradual and successful development of the plan of his airship.

"I know not," said Heber. "I don't want to be in a hurry. To go up and come down would be a horrible disappointment to me."

"That sounds weak," said Ferrall. "You wouldn't collapse like your own sails, would you?"

"No, a hundred failures would not actually daunt me. Yet it would be a glorious thing to rise, and soar, and triumph at once, without a check or a hitch. And I know that the germ of triumph exists in the plan, and will live and grow in the perfected mechanism. I would rather wait any time to have the thing perfected before inviting the criticism of the world."

"But you will make some trial trips before you steer for the Pole?" said Ferrall, turning slightly away with the half-smile that he sometimes had to hide from Heber's eyes.

"Oh, of course! But, you understand, I don't want to come down unexpectedly, even once."

"Well, my boy, I wish I could go with you on that trip to the Pole. The very thought of it is exhilarating."

"Why not?"

"Ah, several whys, but one is enough! My blood would run too cold in those icy regions. If I were as young as you——"

Heber laughed a bright laugh.

"Aye, it's good to be young when you have got a big thing to do. However, I don't know that we shall be able to carry more than two. And there is another man, one of our engineers, who is as keen as myself."

Ferrall lit a fresh pipe. "Come now," he said, "what do you really expect to find when you reach that white goal?"

"I expect nothing—but knowledge," said Heber.

"You have formed some kind of idea of actualities," said Ferrall. "Is it to be an exaggeration of polar bears

in number and kind, or will there be a surprise of something new to our non-arctic imaginations?"

"I don't know. That question is for scientific speculators who sit at home. It is mine to go and see. I like the fellows who think there is a region to be discovered which will set us all longing to make a trip to the highest north for winter quarters, to bask in sunshine while our rivers at home are fringed with frost, and our streets running a-puddle with rain. But these fellows are either mad or poets, I fear—either or both, as is often the case—while I am neither."

"Some of the fellows would say you were one of them —I mean the lunatics or the poets," said Ferrall, allowing the oft-hidden smile to broaden and be seen on his face.

"Oh, yes!" said Heber. "Let them! When my invention is proved a failure they can lock me up. But in my padded cell I shall be inventing an improvement. As for the poets, when I have made my hit they will be singing my praises like birds in May. I don't want either their jeers or their praises. I shall have done my work—as a beginning——"

"What will you go on to next? When the road to the highest north has been opened to every traveller for change of air, what will you turn your attention to?"

"How can I tell? These things come in waves, and out of one wave breaks another. One thing is clear to me. I must go on conquering difficulties and creating usefulness as long as I live."

"Even if some other fellow gets to the North Pole before you? One or two are already ahead of you, travelling in the old-fashioned way by ships that fight

through the bergs, and sledges that cut across the ice-fields. America has a brave explorer on the warpath. What if he should come back with news before your wings are preened for flight?"

"Why, I shall honour him, of course," said Heber. "But that shall not prevent my own exploring flights. There is many a still unexplored part of those regions besides the very Pole."

"True."

"And besides, I have another object in determining to visit those parts of the earth. Think you, will your American voyager go out of his course to search for the Earl of Finbarr?"

"I believe I may safely assure you that he will not," said Ferrall.

"Then he is not in the running with me," said Heber. "I intend to return with Noreen's father on board my ship."

"How can you believe it probable, even possible?"

"Because Noreen believes I shall do it."

"Has she dreamed a prophetic dream?"

"Perhaps so. At all events she is convinced of it, and in all things I am moved by her will. I live in the light of her sympathy."

"Ah! I see you are a double dreamer. You fly high in more than one sense of the words."

"I shall always fly high. Better soar, even to fall, than plod and creep."

"Bravo!" said Ferrall. "I hope I shall live to see the double dreamer wideawake, and with all his dreams realized."

CHAPTER XXXVII

Honoria to her Friend Mildred

"In all this sunshine there is not one shady spot for making note in dull pen-and-ink of dazzling impressions. I scarcely remember where my letter left off. I tried to tell you something of Granada, the Alhambra, and the travel through the Pyrenees. Now we are in Italy on our way to Rome, and I am still dizzy with the excitement of the Alps. I may tell you that the little children on the highest places are as like as possible to Irish children, and there are moments when one might be in Connaught. You and Mr. Ferrall and Heber will laugh at this, but it is true.

"From Rome we go on to some of the least-visited Italian cities, travelling a good deal in by-ways, as much as possible by some kind of carriage and horses. Uncle Jim is treating us royally, and delights in giving us pleasure. He has written to Rolf to join us in Rome, so that the rest of our trip promises to be even pleasanter than the beginning, at least in the matter of our company. Poor Cousin Emmeline has never ceased craving to have her boy included in our party, and I hope she will be happier when he comes. . . .

". . . Here we are in Rome, and Rolf is with us. He is a dear, good fellow, and he and I get on capitally. Emmeline is in high good humour, and is much nicer

to me since he is come. If it were only to keep her happy, and easier to get on with, both for myself and Uncle Jim, I must be glad of my cousin's companionship. She seems really delighted to see us young people enjoying ourselves together, and I think poor Rolf is glad of anything that will take him from under the shadow of his mother's wing. I pity her for this, but of course it is all her own fault, as Rolf is an affectionate fellow, as grateful for sympathy as any girl, and I am trying all I can to be a sister to him.

"Sometimes I think he has a trouble on his mind, and that he is longing to confide in me. But he is a little shy, and I am a little shy myself about inviting a confidence. . . .

". . . The latest news is that Ettie Western, travelling with a party of friends of her mother's, has arrived in Rome, and they are staying at this hotel, so that we see a good deal of them. Ettie is brighter and bonnier than ever, and I can't think why it is that Cousin Emmeline hates her. Perhaps she must always have somebody to hate, in order to keep in good humour with the rest of the world; and now that I am in her good graces, poor Ettie is the unfavoured one. It may be that she cannot like two girls at once. She has so many funny eccentricities that it is impossible to tell. But if kindness to Rolf be the price of her goodwill, then poor Ettie ought to stand high, for no one could be nicer to him than she is. I said something like that to Mrs. Turbary one day, and she said: 'My dear, I don't want any girl to be nice to him but yourself.' And that is ridiculous. Fortunately Ettie does not mind her.

"She is a dear, lively girl, and makes us very gay.

At present she is full of fun about her good grandmother's failure to plant her English village in the Egyptian desert, after all the toil and expense of transporting people and things for its establishment. It seems that even the parson has struck, seeing that the metal church which was part of his chattels turned red-hot under the sun of the desert; and the congregation refuse to hold their services in the dungeon of an Egyptian tomb temple inhabited by mummies, where crocodiles and bulls and black kings and queens have been worshipped. The poor old Duchess of Doldrums weeps over their obstinacy, believing it a good work to Christianize those regions by making an enlightened use of those useless dungeon tombs. She has ordered out a quantity of English timber, to be cut on her own estate, to make torches to be carried through those benighted halls and passages; and Lady Western writes to Ettie that she is fretting at the disfigurement of and loss to the beautiful woods. And all is of no avail, because naturally the people dislike living in the tombs as well as praying in them; and the picking up of a few scarabs, which they do not understand, is little to them as exchange for the sweetness and the comfortableness of life in an English village. The conclusion come to here is that if you want to take people to Egypt you must educate them first, or else keep them clear of the desert, and give them work on the great reservoir. But all this has given me a great desire to go to Egypt. When Heber has perfected his airship I dare say it will be an easy trip, and we can alight on the crown of the head of a Sphinx, without the trouble of climbing up its neck and over its features."

When this letter was read, one day, Heber rose up and went out while Noreen was still discoursing about Rolf's attractions and her own regard for him, without waiting for the mention of himself and his airship. Mr. Ferrall, who had arrived early that evening, was consulted by Mildred as to the advisability of showing him the passage that might comfort him. Would it not be wiser in his real interests to let him imagine that Honoria was not thinking of him at all? She probably only threw in those last words out of kindness, and his fidelity and persistence of character might lead him to give a false value to them.

But Ferrall voted for an entire show of hands.

"Conceal nothing," he said. "Interfere with nothing. Let matters take their course. If Heber has yet to endure a great shock of disappointment he can bear it. He has moral as well as physical courage. As for Noreen, one can hardly estimate the effect of circumstances and associations on a girl of impressionable heart and imagination. At her age, at Heber's age, the affections, in many cases, are only making trial trips. At our age we can look back, and know how precious is a little time allowed for serious developments."

Mildred could not help wondering a little afterwards what trial trips or what serious developments had been experienced by this quiet man, who was so steadfast a friend and so sympathetic with the young; and whether such experiences had been the cause of his now standing alone in the world.

But Ferrall was one of those reserved individuals whose personal joys and sorrows seem to have been dropped into some hidden reservoir of general human

feeling, which yields them in return a daily supply of sympathy for their needy fellow-creatures, while no one is ever allowed to know the cost of their contribution of tears to a never-failing well for the assuagement of the thirst of humanity.

"How mysterious," thought Mildred, "are the ways of God in apportioning to each of us our share in the goods and ills of life, our portion of the general burthen to be carried! If this man had been a successful writer, or a wealthy man of business, or a happy family man, who would have given to Heber and Honoria the education they received from him on a foreshore of Connaught? And that is only one instance of his unobtrusive helpfulness."

When his mother, following Ferrall's advice, showed Heber the whole of Honoria's letter, he smiled, handing it back to her, but did not say a word. In proportion as his work prospered and seemed nearing completion he grew more reserved on the subject of Honoria. And so the summer days went on until there was news of the return of the travellers. Another letter from Noreen gave warning that they were turning their steps towards home.

"It has all been delightful," she wrote, "and yet somehow I have had less peace to enjoy myself since Ettie came. Mrs. Turbary has an astonishing power of interfering with one's happiness, even when she is most friendly, and I am beginning to think I liked her better when she hated me. I seem to be nothing in the world now, in her eyes, but Rolf's cousin; and really, if I am not an affectionate cousin to him I don't know what affectionate cousinship can mean. She tries to make me quarrel with Ettie, and I

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simply won't. She and Rolf and I get on beautifully together. I understand them both, and both of them trust me; and Ettie is the life of our party, with her never-flagging spirits and good humour. What Mrs. Turbary can see in her to object to I am unable to imagine. She is always trying to prejudice Uncle Jim against her, but I don't believe she will ever succeed. His eyes are too wide open, and his heart is too big.

"But all the same, though Ettie does not mind her either, his mother's continual worry about us all is a trouble to Rolf. He never seems to please her, and she is unreasonably cross to him, though she praises him incessantly behind his back. If he and Ettie are looking at a picture together, she puts her head in between them and tells them they have bad taste and are studying the wrong Old Master, and wants to send Rolf across the gallery to benefit by my superior judgment, while she undertakes to instruct Ettie in the kind of picture to admire. As if everyone had not the right to admire the kind of picture that appeals to one!

"I often wonder what Uncle Jim thinks of it all. He always seems to be smiling to himself at things in general, and, as he loves oddities and eccentricities, perhaps Mrs. Turbary's curious ways are an amusement to him. And then, he, too, is evidently pleased to see me and Rolf enjoying ourselves together. That, of course, is all as it should be, for he wants to be good to us both. But he is never unkind to Ettie as Rolf s mother is, and I am sure he is fond of her too. She makes him laugh about her grandmamma's Egyptian village, while Mrs. Turbary holds that she treats the dear Duchess with unfilial irreverence.

"So, all things considered, dear Mildred, I shall not be quite sorry when we are back at the Towers. Ettie will then have gone home to her mother, and Rolf to his college. I shall have to fight my little battles with Cousin Emmeline single-handed, that is, if, one irritating girl (poor Ettie) being removed, the other girl (poor me) becomes irritating again, as she used to be.

"I would rather she remained my friend, for then I should have nothing to spoil my joy in English gardens and woods in their summer beauty, as I have never yet seen them; or my delight in telling you a thousand particulars of my travels which no amount of letter-writing could ever convey to you."

CHAPTER XXXVIII

"I Have Expected Nothing"

HONORIA was walking through the gardens she had longed to see in bloom, and they did not disappoint her.

With the train of her white dress thrown over her arm, her golden head bare, and her eyes shining with delight, she went slowly between the hedges of sweet pea—rosy, lavender, purple, and the lanes of tall dahlias rising above her shoulders, making arabesques of ruby and amber and pale gold against their dark green foliage.

No child of the slums, taken into the country for a holiday, feels more rapture at first acquaintance with summer flowers than did this girl who had grown up to womanhood among the bogs and rocks of Connaught.

Every fresh bed or grove of lovely growths was hailed with joy, and wondered at, and loved. She did not want anyone to tell her the names of the exquisite creatures, or that these had a high value with connoisseurs, and those were poorer things in the market. Their individual beauty, their collective splendour, their lavish fragrance, were enough for her.

"Why, for so short a life, so much imperial glory?" she thought, as she passed lingeringly out of the

solemn gateway formed by two great Irish yews, square towers of green and purple that led from the mazes of the flower-garden to the open and smoothly shaven lawns.

Across the smooth sward came a splendid peacock to meet her, trailing his jewelled tail, the small black head haughtily set, the whole creature swelling with arrogance.

Honoria flung her white train behind her on the grass, and, mimicking his solemn movement, curtsied deeply to his magnificence.

"Very pretty, my dear!" said a voice behind her, and Cousin Emmeline appeared at her elbow.

"Isn't he a royal creature?" said Honoria.

"I have heard that peacocks do not like to be mocked," said Emmeline.

"How do they make that known?"

"Most things have a way of making their ill will felt. But come to this seat under the tree. I want to talk to you."

"I must first apologize to the peacock. I did not mean to mock him. I delight in his beauty. He has a right to his impudence."

Honoria would have preferred to continue her walk about the gardens alone, but she sat down with Mrs. Turbary under the trees. The world was all very sweet, and it was not in her at the moment to disappoint or give annoyance to anyone.

"How delightful it is here," said Emmeline, "and poor dear Rolf back at his college! Don't you feel it lonely without him?"

"I don't feel lonely," said Honoria, "but of course I miss Rolf."

"Ah, yes! You and he suit each other so exactly. And you are so sweet to him."

"I am very fond of Rolf. It is nice to have a cousin. By the way, how do we come to be cousins? His father was not my father's brother."

"Not so near as that. Oh, no, my love, you need not be uneasy! It is not too near a relationship."

"I should have no objection to its being a nearer relationship."

"I am so glad. It is what we have been hoping—Rolf, Lord Gytrash, and myself. It is sweet of you to be so frank in the matter. Poor Rolf is shy and easily abashed. But he will talk to you himself."

"Rolf has never been shy with me," said Honoria. "He always talks to me quite freely. Is there any particular matter which he wants to talk to me about?"

"Now, my dear, you may be perfectly frank with me. No one would expect anything like pretence from a girl of your honest character."

Emmeline had carefully thought out the line of this conversation, and arranged her leading part in it so as to have a certain effect on Honoria.

"I hope I am honest," the girl said, "but I am all at a loss to know what you are trying to make me understand, Mrs. Turbary."

"You don't mean to say, my love, that you have not known what would be the natural consequence of your charming sweetness to this dear cousin who has been so much in your company for so many weeks past?"

"No, I don't know of any consequence, except that we have become more intimate, and as friendly as cousins ought to be."

"Honoria, my dear, I have never imagined you a coquette."

"Thank you!" said the girl, with rising indignation. "It is very kind of you."

"I did not expect you to take this tone with Rolf's mother, Honoria. You must have been aware that my dear boy had dreams——"

"Perhaps I have. But they had nothing to do with me."

"Ah, you are jealous! And perhaps of an insignificant little person like Ettie Western. Come, Honoria, be just to your own powers of attraction——"

Honoria, flushed with indignation, suddenly rose up to go.

"Stay!" said Emmeline. "There is more that I would say to you. You are perhaps displeased that I have anticipated Rolf in speaking so plainly to you; and it may be I ought to have been silent. But now that the thing is done I feel bound to go farther. You may not know that Lord Gytrash feels as strongly on this matter as I do, even almost as does my son —though whose feelings can equal those of a lover?"

"No, I have not known it," said Honoria.

"I think you must have known that his lordship intended to make you and Rolf his joint heirs."

"He has never told me anything of the kind."

"You have expected perhaps to be his sole heiress?"

"No, no, no!" said Honoria. "I have expected nothing. He has been very good to me, too much so, maybe, for my real benefit, but his generosity is in his hand from day to day. He may intend to make Rolf his sole heir for all that I know, and he is welcome to do so as far as I am concerned. As for the arrange-

ment you have been hinting, I shall not believe that he is in your plot unless he tells me so himself——"

"Plot! How unamiable, how unladylike!" murmured Emmeline.

"I am not going to be thrown into the bargain, as a sort of makeweight," fumed Honoria. "I mean to hold my life in my own hands."

"You are ambitious of grasping all. You have no heart, perhaps."

"Whether I have a heart or not is my own affair. I shall not sell it, at all events. But I will speak to Lord Gytrash, and ask him if he has consented to this manœuvring."

"I warn you that if you do so you will be most unmaidenly."

"Then I am going to be unmaidenly," said Honoria, turning away and trailing her white train across the sward, with her head at an angle of hauteur which might have excited the envy and emulation of the peacock.

She could not wait for her indignation to cool, but went immediately in search of Lord Gytrash, whom she found in his "den".

"Hello!" cried his lordship, as the girl swept silently into the room like a white flame. He threw away his sporting paper and sat up. Never had he seen Honoria looking exactly like that before.

"What extraordinary thing has happened, Noreen?"

Honoria felt a little shocked at seeing the effect she had produced, and tried to laugh.

"Oh, nothing dreadful!" she said. "Only something Mrs. Turbary has been saying."

"Is that all? Mrs. Emmeline is trying sometimes.

I was afraid it was a thunderbolt, or a comet, or an earthquake. How has the old lady been misbehaving herself?"

Honoria was now feeling how difficult it would be to explain herself.

"My lord——" she began.

"Uncle Jim, if you please, my child."

Honoria looked at the kind, quizzical face, and her passion subsided, and she could not think of any words in which to clothe her grievance.

"Come! Out with it, Honoria! Am I an ogre that you are afraid to speak to me?"

"Oh, Uncle Jim, you are the best and kindest—and that is why I cannot believe——"

"What can't you believe? I am dying with curiosity."

"I can't believe that you would make up a plan with Mrs. Turbary to marry me to my Cousin Rolf."

"So now it is out!" said Gytrash. "That is the horrible enormity. Well, my, dear, I have entered into no plan. But I confess it appears to me that two young people who are excellent friends and chums might very well be happy in spending their lives together. Rolf is a very good fellow, if he is not brilliant, and you have wits enough for both."

"Any wits I have got I require for my own guidance," said Honoria hastily. "If I were bound to a man who had none of his own, and was always having to borrow mine, I should lose my wits, and then there would be none for either of us!"

Lord Gytrash looked at her keenly and laughed. He was going to try her to the utmost.

"I am not romantic," he said. "All that was taken out of me early. But I have heard that a true woman

will be willing to supply all in her power to the man she loves——"

"To the man she——" murmured Honoria, and left the sentence unfinished.

"I have heard you say you were very fond of Rolf," said his lordship.

"So I am," said Honoria. "But that is a different thing from marrying him."

"These are fine-drawn distinctions," said Gytrash, examining the backs of his nails, to keep his eyes off Honoria's face. He felt he could not go on with what he intended to say to her if he looked straight at that innocent and indignant countenance.

"Are they?" asked Noreen, with a sort of cry in her voice that startled him with a suggestion of something existing in woman of which he had no personal experience.

"Now, Honoria," he said, "let us be sensible. I will explain my intentions to you. You and Rolf are both interesting to me as young people of my kindred, and I have wished to benefit you both. I had intended making you my sole heiress, but, seeing that Rolf is a good fellow, I have felt sure that you would be glad to divide with him. It would indeed please me well if you and he were to become one and let me start you together in life. Are you going to disappoint me?"

"I must, I must," said Honoria. "It may be ungrateful, it may be unpardonable, but I can't and won't marry Rolf——"

"That sounds pretty decided," said his lordship, suppressing a smile; "but you have been taken by surprise, and you had better think it over. I am going from home for a few days, and when I come back we can talk about

it all again. And we can have Rolf with us for a holiday."

Honoria was silent.

Lord Gytrash ventured to glance at her, and then went on to deal his last blow.

"Remember, my dear, that if you do not please me I am at liberty to give Rolf the preference, and make him my sole heir."

"I understand," said Honoria quietly.

"I would remind you also that when your father's death, which it is generally believed has already taken place, becomes an assured fact, Rolf will succeed to his title. You may live to be Countess of Finbarr, with all my goodwill and means wherewith to keep up the position."

At the mention of her father's name Honoria drew a deep breath and was silent for a moment. When she spoke it was merely to repeat in a low voice:

"I understand."

"And now, my dear, you may go and reflect at leisure on your power to make your kinsfolk happy. I have considerable faith in your good sense."

"Thank you, Uncle Jim! And, whatever happens, remember that I am, and shall be always, grateful to you."

CHAPTER XXXIX

"She Has Been Too Impetuous"

LORD GYTRASH left home early the next morning, and Honoria sat in her room thinking over his words, as he had desired.

The plan for disposing of her future came on her with a shock. Nothing proposed or suggested by Mrs. Turbary would have impressed her as necessitating her departure from under the roof of her generous guardian; but his lordship's explanation of his views seemed to leave her no alternative.

After long thought and a few tears, which were quickly repressed, she began to write a letter.

"Dear Uncle Jim," she wrote, "I hope you will not be angry or vexed if you do not find me here when you return. I feel that I should be a miserable creature if I were to stay in your house, taking your benefits, after having annoyed and disappointed you. I had no idea of what your intentions were with regard to me and Rolf until Mrs. Turbary explained them to me; and I cannot bear you should think me guilty of the coquetry of which she accused me. Rolf and I understand each other perfectly. We are good friends and affectionate cousins. I have often said that I was very fond of him, and that alone might have shown his mother that I was not thinking of marrying him.

"It might be a fine thing to be a countess, with plenty of money, but a woman ought not to marry anyone for whom she cannot feel the unselfish devotion that bears sickness, poverty, danger, every dreadful thing in life for the sake of another. You will smile at this as romantic, perhaps, but natures are different, and what is exaggeration to one is simple truth to another. I am very fond of Rolf as a cousin, but I could not be happy as his wife.

"It is very fit and right that you should make him your heir, and after my father's death he will bear the family title worthily. For myself, I shall be satisfied if you think of me with affection, and believe that I would have pleased you thoroughly if it had been in my power.

"I now intend to earn my independence by some kind of work such as women do in the world. Dear Mrs. O'Donovan will take me in till I can see farther. I shall not venture into your presence again until I am sure that you have forgiven me."

Having dispatched this letter to the address left by his lordship, Honoria wrote a second letter, telling Mildred of what had happened.

"You know I always felt that there was a certain unreality about my position here, something that had the glamour of the old fairy tales about it. Now the castle of dreams has vanished into the clouds, Aladdin's jewels are bits of glass, and Cinderella is in her rags again. It seems quite natural, for I really am at heart still the wild girl brought to you by poor old Mauria years ago, much more than the pampered young lady who was known as the adopted daughter of Lord Gytrash.

"Will you take me as a lodger while I look about for employment in London? I feel quite sure that I can find something that will secure my independence. Many things occur to me, and the words are in my ears: 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might'. The spirit is willing, and I am thankful to God that I can say the flesh is not weak. I am strong and healthy, and I have plenty of courage, and, besides, a natural taste for adventure.

"You see I do not say a word about disappointing Rolf, because I feel certain that he does not know of the proposal that has been made in his name. I have a suspicion that there is much happiness in store for him, and I shall rejoice in his good fortune as heir to Uncle Jim."

A welcoming letter from Mildred came quickly in reply, and Honoria set about her preparations for departure. She made a parcel of the most costly of the jewels given her by his lordship, and addressed it to him, along with a little note of explanation:

"I have kept a few of your generous gifts, dear Uncle Jim, more precious to me because less intrinsically valuable. I know you would wish me to have something for remembrance, but these which I now restore to you would not be useful to me in the life I have chosen. They were intended for the adopted daughter of Lord Gytrash, and will be fitly worn by the future wife of his heir. I have no fear that you will misunderstand me."

In the same spirit she selected the least rich and remarkable articles of her wardrobe, and packed her modest trunks. When all was done she went to Mrs. Turbary's room to announce her departure.

"I am going to pay a visit to Mrs. O'Donovan," she said. "I have written about it to Lord Gytrash."

Emmeline was confounded. She had just dispatched a missive to Rolf, bidding him come to the Towers for a holiday. And now, was she to be the only person there to entertain him?

"It is a curious step to take at the present moment," she said. "You had a serious conversation with his lordship before he went away?"

"Yes," said Honoria, moving to the door. She was in her travelling dress, and a vehicle was waiting for her.

"He did not tell me he had allowed you to pay this visit," said Emmeline. "I saw him off, and he said not a word about it."

"He knows of it now," said Honoria.

Mrs. Turbary followed her to the hall.

"What? Two trunks! How long do you intend to remain at Mrs. O'Donovan's?"

"That is uncertain," said Honoria. "Good-bye, Mrs. Turbary!"

Emmeline watched the carriage out of sight, and turned back into the hall, full of amazement and misgiving. Here she was, all alone in this place, Lord Gytrash gone on one side, Honoria on another. Her plan, ripe for success, seemed to have got a touch of blight. Gytrash had certainly told her that he had explained everything to Honoria; and here was Rolf coming to find the place deserted, and nobody to meet him but his mother!

Her foreboding thoughts were interrupted by the arrival of a note from Rolf by the midday post.

"I am sorry to disappoint you, my Mother," wrote Rolf, "but I had already engaged to spend the coming week with the Westerns. My love to Honoria and to hospitable, generous Uncle Jim."

Here was another and even a heavier blow. Ettie Western, with no fortune and a spendthrift father! Ah, how these people had been plotting against her! Lady Western thought to marry her daughter to the heir to the millions of Lord Gytrash, and to a title.

She must calm herself and think out these matters to some kind of conclusion. After all, was it not well that if Honoria rejected Rolf she should have displeased her benefactor and retired from under his roof? For, after close consideration, that was the only state of affairs that would account for Honoria's sudden departure. Gytrash had evidently kept his promise of speaking to the girl about the projected marriage, and there had been a quarrel and a breach. If she could only now rescue Rolf from the claws of the Westerns, and see him placed in his proper position as prospective Earl of Finbarr, and master of Tam Towers, she ought to be all the better satisfied with Honoria's downfall. A new plan must be immediately arranged, and meanwhile she would write a letter to Carrie, her faithful confidante in India.

Honoria arrived at Mildred's cottage one evening during Heber's long hours of absence.

"I have not told Heber," said Mildred, "because I hoped that some better understanding with Lord Gytrash would prevent your coming."

"There was no chance of that," said Honoria. "He has gone away for some time, and I could not wait for his return. Besides, nothing could alter the existing state of things."

Then there was a long conversation, in which everything was explained. Honoria had several plans for

action, some one of which she hoped would prove to be practical.

"There's journalistic work," she said, "and Mr. Ferrall might help me to that. He taught me typewriting and shorthand long ago, and I have kept them in practice, writing Uncle Jim's letters. Then there's millinery. I don't mean making hats and bonnets, but serving in a millinery room."

"My dear!"

"Yes. I know a place where I spent money when I was in London *en princesse.* I noticed nice persons walking about in black satin dresses, attending to customers and trying things on. I am a good height, and the sort of figure that would do. Of course, there may not be a vacancy, and I don't want to put another person out of her place that I may step into it."

"I don't think you could if you tried," said Mildred, thinking at the same time that Honoria's face and figure would probably take the prize in case of competition. "And I should hope that you couldn't; it is not the sort of thing I should like for you."

"I must take the first thing that offers," said the girl brightly. "Kindergarten work might be more desirable, but it is not easily obtainable."

She was off early in the morning to the mantle and millinery shops. Time would be required for quest of other openings, but here was an effort that could be made on the instant.

When Heber, who had been up most of the night at his work, was taking his late breakfast, Mildred broke the news that Honoria had returned to them.

"I am trying not to be too much overjoyed," she said, "for I do not believe that the state of affairs that

brought her here can last. Lord Gytrash will not consent to lose her."

Heber understood the hint, and the glad look that had flashed into his face disappeared and left it pale.

"What is the state of affairs?"

"She thinks she has displeased his lordship. I believe she has been too impetuous and acted too hastily. She has left the Towers in her guardian's absence. He will come in search of her on his return."

Heber finished his breakfast in silence. At last he said:

"It is good to have her for ever so short a time, at all events."

And then he went out.

Mildred reflected that she had been wise in leaving Heber in ignorance of the cause of Honoria's difference with Lord Gytrash, and of her coming to London. It might be well that he should remain so for the present. In course of time the whole truth might transpire, but meanwhile it were better that her boy should not be disturbed at his work by dreams that could hardly come true.

And if Honoria engaged in any occupation that kept her from home during the day, while Heber was absent so often in the evenings, they should meet very seldom, except on Sundays.

CHAPTER XL

"Long Ago is Long Ago"

HONORIA paid a round of visits to the great marts for dress and millinery, but was everywhere assured that no new business hands were required. One place had been omitted from her list, the fashionable establishment which, only a short time before, she had patronized in the character of Lady Honoria Turbary, heiress and ward of Lord Gytrash, the millionaire owner of Tam Towers. She had forborne to approach this place through fear of being recognized, but at last made up her mind to overcome her feeling of cowardice.

She was wearing a plain serge dress and a simple black hat, and reasoned that it was quite unlikely she could be identified with her brilliant self of a few months ago.

Presenting herself at the office of Messrs. Flowers & Plume, she found that there was a vacancy in the ranks of their assistants, and was sent on to the inner office of a lady superintendent. Mrs. Courtrobe received her with businesslike callousness, examined her critically, from the black silk bow in her hat to the hem of her well-cut skirt; requested her to walk across the room back and forward several times; then asked her to sit down, and relaxed into civility.

"You have never been at business before, Miss—Miss——?"

"Harriet Thurleston," said Honoria.

"It is not your real name?" said Mrs. Courtrobe.

"No," said Honoria, smiling. "How did you guess that?"

"By a twitter of your eyelids," said the manageress. "You are not much accustomed to deception."

"I do not consider it deception. I have a right to a certain reserve in coming before the public."

"We shall require references."

"Lady Western is a customer of yours. She will answer for my respectability."

"Very good. I will make enquiries. Your business will be to show off robes and mantles by trying them on."

"If I succeed in gaining the post I will do my best to give satisfaction," said Honoria, rising with the air of a queen. Mrs. Courtrobe observed her with a smile as she bowed and moved across the room to the door.

"She will do," thought the woman of business. "There is something of a story behind that very suitable presence; but it is not my affair to know anything about it."

That evening Honoria wrote the following letter:—

"Dear Ettie,

"Circumstances have arisen which have decided me on making myself independent of the great generosity of Lord Gytrash. You are not to suppose it is a quarrel. I am asking you now to become my security for honesty and good conduct to Messrs. Flowers & Plume, where you know we have bought a good many pretty frocks and things. When you and Lady Western

come to deal in future it will be nice of you to speak kindly to your well-behaving protégée, whose name is to be (please remember) Harriet Thurleston,

"*née* HONORIA TURBARY."

"Heber will be angry. He will not like it," said Mildred, who was confounded by the rapidity with which Noreen had settled her affairs.

"I am sorry," said Noreen. "But I am my own mistress. Heber is not my brother. I am not accountable to him, or to anyone. I am not a member of any family."

"You might have remained with us as our visitor, at least for some time," said Mildred. "Long ago you were not so proud, Noreen."

"Long ago is long ago. Am I not grateful to you? Oh, you don't know, you don't know! How can anyone see what is in another's mind and heart? Words say so little, and so often say that little all wrong. Let me live under your roof, sleep here and breakfast here in the early hours, and have time to look at you when I get home in the late evening. Heber and I need hardly meet. I might as well be at Tam Towers for all the difference it need make to him."

Mildred did not dispute the point, and only said: "Stay with me, dear, on any terms you like."

She thought it might be better for Heber if they did not meet. A scene was always before her eyes in which Lord Gytrash was to appear and to recapture his ward and heiress. But, whatever the consequences, Noreen must be sheltered for the time being under the roof of her friends.

On the first day of her appearance in the inner sanctum of the showrooms of the great West-end emporium Honoria stood the fire of a great deal of observation and criticism from her fellow-employees. In her staid walking-dress she might pass without much remark; but when she swept into the showroom in her long, tight-fitting robe of black satin, with her brilliant hair wreathed high round her head as fashion would have it, a little thrill of surprise was felt by all her fellow-workers, not without a touch of envy in the hearts of the less generous. But her simple manners and ready good humour soon overcame all unfriendliness.

"I seem to have known her before," said someone, "and yet I can't think where I could have seen her."

"She isn't one to forget," was the reply. "Some people are like that. They seem to belong to you."

"It's enough to make anyone buy a thing to see her put it on," said a homely girl, who had come in from the workroom with an armful of satin skirts. At the same moment there was a little bustle at the entrance to the showroom from the shop, and a bright young figure fluttered in, and almost ran up to the new saleswoman.

"Oh, Honoria—I mean Harriet!" cried Ettie Western. "What do you mean, you silly——?"

"Sh—sh!" said Honoria. "Are you coming to buy something? What can I show you, Miss Western?"

"Oh, anything you like! Say a theatre cloak. Have you a pretty thing of pale-blue satin, trimmed with silvery embroidery?"

The latter words were spoken loud enough to catch the ears of the other ladies of the showroom, and many hands were busied in an effort to satisfy one of

the best of the customers of Messrs. Flowers & Plume. All the theatre cloaks of the establishment were put before her, and Honoria tried on one after another, gliding up and down before her friend, and saying a few whispered words in her ear between remarks as to the attractions of the garments.

"You musn't talk to me here. Come to see me, or shall I go to see you, first holiday that turns up? If I am discovered here it will be awkward."

"Well then, come. I will write to you. Yes, I will take this one. It is the prettiest. Good-bye, Miss Thurleston! I am glad to see you so nicely situated."

And Ettie, having smothered her curiosity, and controlled her impatience at her friend's fantastic behaviour, took a hasty departure.

One of the girls, who had been holding the theatre cloaks and handing them to Miss Thurleston to be put on, had caught the name "Honoria" when Ettie made her first exclamation on seeing her friend.

"Her name is Honoria, not Harriet," said this young lady. "Now I know who she reminds me of. She is very like the Lady Honoria Turbary, who bought so many handsome things here last season."

"And if she is?"

"I am sure she must be a relative. I am going to find out."

The enterprising young person who made this announcement was not long in finding an opportunity.

"Miss Thurleston," she said, "is it true that you are connected with the Lady Honoria Turbary?"

"I am more than connected. I am related to her by blood," said Honoria.

"You are very like her."

"I dare say there is a family likeness," said Honoria.

For some little time longer the whispers went on, every day some new suggestion being made as to the identity and circumstances of the new saleswoman. But matters came to a crisis when one day a very fashionable customer left the showroom smiling, and remarked to Mrs. Courtrobe, who had come from her office specially to take her orders:

"I see there is a pretty little comedy going on here. You have got Lady Honoria Turbary presiding in your showroom."

"Madam!" exclaimed the manageress in amazement.

The wealthy customer laughed.

"Oh, don't let me spoil the fun! I have no doubt she is doing it for a bet. Girls do such odd things nowadays. You know, she is the daughter of an earl, and heiress to the millionaire Lord Gytrash. Surely she ought to be allowed to amuse herself to the top of her bent."

"Certainly, madam."

"And I advise you to let the thing go on till the fanciful young lady herself puts an end to it. She will be very wealthy some day, and have power——"

Mrs. Courtrobe retired to her office in great consternation, and asked herself how she was to make the best of this extraordinary situation. After much reflection she decided that her best policy was to be silent, and to let matters run on to their natural conclusion.

Evidently, however, the lady who had first discovered her had not been silent as to the fantastic steps taken by the fascinating heiress to millions, seeing how many

fashionable ladies arrived in the course of a few days, desiring to be served by Miss Thurleston, and pressing round her with covert smiles, intended to reassure her that though they had surprised her secret they understood the clever jest, and would keep her counsel.

For some time Honoria held on her way, and affected not to know her customers, nor to be aware of their recognition. At last a particularly lively young lady confronted her with:

"Well, Lady Honoria, you have won your bet. How long do you mean to keep up this little farce?"

That evening Honoria went to Mrs. Courtrobe, and asked to be allowed to send in her resignation. She expected to be met with reproach for her capricious conduct, if not held to the fulfilment of her engagement.

But Mrs. Courtrobe received her with great *empressement.*

"Of course, Lady Honoria, you can withdraw when you please. We feel highly flattered at having been selected by you in your design for your little play. We will only ask to be remembered by your ladyship in continuation of your former favours."

CHAPTER XLI

Intrinsically Noble

"So now it must be Mr. Ferrall and the typewriting," thought Honoria, as she passed out of the doors of Messrs. Flowers & Plume.

And then she saw Heber standing waiting for her on the pavement. He was drawn up in a soldierly attitude, and looked distinctly displeased.

"I have come to see you home, Lady Honoria," he said. "I heard only this morning that you have been crossing London every evening alone. You must not do so again."

"Must not? Why, Heber, am I not my own mistress? It is certainly no one's affair but my own."

"It is my affair while you are under my mother's roof," said Heber. "I am going to be your escort every evening, so long as you persist in indulging your present fancy."

"That will give you a great deal of trouble, quite too much after your fatiguing day's work. But it is very kind of you, and don't let us quarrel. We didn't quarrel much in the old days when we worked at the model together, and you used to hide it in the rocks."

"Didn't we? Or when we learned our lessons together at Mr. Ferrall's."

"Not so very long ago, and yet it seems an age. By the way, don't you sometimes see Mr. Ferrall? I wonder if he could get me some typewriting to do, or if I could take shorthand notes for him anywhere?"

"Why do you want such occupations? What would Lord Gytrash say to them?"

"Nothing that would signify. I have not quarrelled with Lord Gytrash, but he understands that I prefer to be an independent woman."

"Don't be an independent woman. You were never made for one."

"Oh, but I was!" said Honoria. They were walking quickly along a crowded thoroughfare, in which the wayfarers had been increased by the emptying of shuttered shops.

They were swept apart for half a minute, and then Heber, pushing impatiently through obstructions, came up alongside of her again.

"I want to hear about the airship. You have not told me anything about it. Have you yet made a trial trip? When are we going on that flight to the arctic regions?"

"My first trial trip comes off a few days hence. Will you come to see it, Lady Honoria?"

"Not unless you give up calling me Lady Honoria —an empty title. I would rather be Noreen to my friends."

"Well then, Noreen, will you come to see the first flight of the Heber O'Donovan flying machine, which is to make its inventor's name famous, and to conquer contrary winds and scale the heights of cloudland?"

"Ah, now you are talking like a playfellow I had of old! Yes, I will come and see you off. You promised to take me with you to search for my father, but I have grown to believe that neither seaship nor airship will ever find him."

"Why?"

"Because of the stern belief of those around me. They say it is impossible he could be living. And they have already given his title away to Rolf."

"I see. Rolf will be Earl of Finbarr?"

"Yes."

"And his wife will be Countess of Finbarr?"

"Naturally."

"She will be a charming lady."

"I think so."

"Do you know her?"

"I believe I do. But I am not at liberty yet to tell you more about it at present."

Heber's haunting jealousy was in arms in a moment.

"But very soon, perhaps. I suppose you have been seeing a good deal of Rolf?"

"Not very much quite lately."

"He was with you on your travels?"

"Part of the time."

"You expect to see him soon again?"

"I think he is coming to see me next Sunday."

"Good! You and he are excellent friends, I hear."

"The best. Rolf is a dear fellow, and I am very fond of him."

It was now the moment to jump into a 'bus, and no more could be said. Heber sat staring over the heads of the opposite people, and over the housetops as they

jogged past them, seeing an imaginary airship flying away anywhere and everywhere, like the magic carpet in the *Arabian Nights*, with a captured Honoria on board, and Heber O'Donovan at the helm.

A day or two later Mr. Ferrall arrived with a parcel of manuscript, some his own and some belonging to a friend, and as Honoria had meanwhile bought a typewriting machine she was enabled to set to work at once in her new line of business. Ferrall was greatly interested in her present adventures, but like Mrs. O'Donovan he did not believe they would continue long.

"I could have lent you a typewriter," he said. "It was scarcely worth while to purchase one."

"Why not worth while? Do you think I shall fail to get work?"

"I think you will not require to seek for it."

"Oh, but I shall! A strong young woman like me does not live upon air."

"Lord Gytrash will see that you have something more substantial."

"I have displeased Lord Gytrash."

"If that be the case I am sorry."

"So am I. Mrs. O'Donovan knows all about it. There are things that cannot be helped. He has been extraordinarily good to me, and he knows that I am grateful, only my gratitude does not take the right form to please him."

"I should not think he would be hard to please where you are concerned. I think it will always please him to protect you."

"Well, you see, Mr. Ferrall, I have received enormous benefits from you and from him, and if I signally fail

to show my gratitude I am bound to retire. I am old enough and able to provide for myself. If my father be dead, as everyone assures me he is, then I am nobody's daughter."

"You are looked on as a daughter by two childless men, myself and Gytrash. If he should really cast you off, I shall feel it my business to take you under my wing. But Gytrash wants a daughter, and he has the better right."

"He will have Rolf's wife. Rolf will be his son and his heir."

"Who is Rolf's wife?"

"Somebody that is not me," said Honoria. A sudden sense of fun lit up her eyes.

"Oh!" said Ferrall. He had got a new light, and instantly realized the situation.

"I should not have thought that Gytrash——" he began, after a pause for a few moments' reflection.

"He is the best and kindest," said Honoria, "but he has a right to his own views and his own conditions. So now, Mr. Ferrall, you, who were my earliest friend, after old Mauria and Mrs. O'Donovan, will not refuse to help me, if you can, to get honest work. I owe you already far more than money, or worldly favour, or titles."

Honoria's eyes were grave now, and her face was glowing with the feeling that she had tried to express in her words.

Ferrall observed her, and smiled.

"Be it so," he said. "I admire your spirit, and commend your purpose. A noble enthusiasm for the highest ideal is splendid in youth. It is the best foundation for the building up of character."

Honoria listened to him as the mentor who had given her her lessons long ago. She knew that his moralizing was fine, but at the same time her mind held in reserve a belief that he could not possibly understand all the delicate motives that actuated her.

"But," he added, "remember that if you break down, in courage or in practice, you are to come to me. I will keep my eye on you."

Honoria's gratitude tightened her hold on his hand, and though she was not by any means a weeping kind of maiden, two large tears stood in her eyes. But when he was gone she found her resolution unshaken.

"I will never go back to beggary and dependence," she said, "not even to the kindest friend. I am full of spirit and the power to work. What is the meaning or use of having a title of nobility if one is not intrinsically noble?"

Her next visitor was Rolf, who came to talk to her, full of anxiety to gain her sympathy in some particular affairs of his own.

"I am dreadfully sorry about your running away from the Towers," he said. "It makes things harder for—all of us."

"Does it? How?" asked Noreen, opening her eyes very wide.

"Don't you guess? And I know you would not wish to harm us."

"Harm you! Why, you are a dear fellow, and I am very fond of you, Rolf."

"But you don't want to marry me?"

"No, I don't. Nor do you want to marry me. What would Ettie say to that?"

"I knew you guessed."

"But how can I harm you by letting them know positively that I don't want to be Countess of Finbarr, and mistress of millions?"

"It was put that way to you, was it?"

"Just that way."

"It must have been my mother. I don't believe Lord Gytrash would——"

"Your mother broke the matter to me, but Uncle Jim agreed. He wants a proper heir, you see, Rolf, and you will suit him beautifully. Ettie will make a delightful little countess, and you, I am sure, will worthily uphold my father's name."

"It is not right. He made it known that you were his adopted daughter and his heiress. He intended to do something for me too, but he never hinted at any conditions. As for Ettie, my mother has set her face against her, because she says she has no fortune. Lord Gytrash told her that the Westerns are extravagant people, who cannot give their daughter a guinea. This opposition seems to prove that his lordship has no intention of making me his heir. If he had, it would not be important that I should marry a fortune."

"Well, my dear boy, you will find that as I am out of the way your mother will come round to Ettie. She is well born, and personally has all the charms and qualities desirable. Besides, she is a darling, and nobody could long keep from loving her."

Rolf's face beamed with delighted approval of the above statements.

"At all events, we are engaged," he said, "and Lady Western has given a sort of conditional consent, subject to the intentions of Lord Gytrash. We are not alarmed

at the prospect of comparative poverty, and intend to take our own way in any case."

"But why did you say that my running away would harm you?"

"It makes a crisis, and may displease Lord Gytrash, and influence his conduct towards us all. If you could have waited and taken the matter quietly——"

"Well, dear Rolf, I am not so prudent as you, perhaps. But I thought that even his displeasure with me, if he be so displeased, might be better for you and Ettie."

"We don't want to profit by your misfortune."

"It is no misfortune. You know, I was brought up wild, and there is something of the gipsy in me. Ettie is delightfully conventional, and will fit into her place with ease. I should always feel that my wings were clipped, and should be girding at my golden chains."

"Nonsense!" said Rolf. "And, besides, there is nothing settled yet."

CHAPTER XLII

"It is Not a Failure"

THE day arrived which was to see the trial trip of Heber's airship.

He had been working late and early, with little sleep and strained nerves, expecting a triumph which seemed assured, but keenly alive to the effect on his own pride and ambition of a failure which some people thought to be possible, and others maintained to be in the highest degree probable.

He had said to himself that in the hour of his triumph he would lay his success at Honoria's feet, and know at last whether or not he possessed her heart.

He had been horribly jealous of Rolf and of the claims of the powerful Lord Gytrash. She had broken with her whimsical guardian, but there remained Rolf, to whom she had given a long interview the other day, sending him away happy. He could not bear to think of her as a coquette, but had she not many times given him to understand that she was happier with him and his mother than with anyone else in the world?

He had been assured by the engineers who had built his ship that on its wings he might soar to the heights of fame and fortune. His own imperious will desired even a greater achievement, the joy of Honoria, all his

own, borne with him in that car into a future of happiness and activity.

A crowd was gathered on the ground from which the ship was to be launched on the air; friends, competitors for success on the same lines, sympathetic or more or less envious, and a large number of the merely curious were there. Mildred and Honoria were early on the spot, and Rolf and the Westerns and Lord Gytrash were espied among the knots of the spectators.

The thrilling moment arrived, the ship was launched, and soared like a bird. A few minutes it slit the air like an arrow, flying as if making for an easy circuit of the universe. But what was this? Suddenly it seemed to shy like a frightened horse, twitched and staggered, and began to drop more rapidly than it had ascended.

The crowd who had cheered were quick to hiss. "Failure! Fiasco!" cried some, and laughed. Many rushed off to find the spot on which the ship would strike in its descent.

"Where? where?" cried Mildred, realizing nothing but death for her son. Honoria held her up. Nobody heeded them. Everyone had hurried to the scene of excitement, the place at which the ship had struck the earth. While they strove to follow, the news met them. The ship was down. Nobody was killed; but Heber O'Donovan had got a leg broken.

"Thank God it is no worse!" said Mildred. "But oh, how this will fret him!"

The colour began to return to Honoria's white face.

"Cheer up!" she said. "It is only a hitch. There is always a breakdown at first."

Rolf came in search of them with all the comfort that could be mustered.

"They have taken him to hospital to have his leg set. In a few days you will have him home again, Mrs. O'Donovan."

Mildred gathered up her courage and followed Rolf to the hospital, where she was allowed to see her son, while Honoria waited to take her home.

"He does not care about the hurt," she said. "He laughs at the pain. But the failure—he does not know how to bear it."

"He must bear it," said Noreen. "Why should he be so horribly proud? People fail, and fail, and fail, and then of a sudden there is success—with a huge S."

"I wish he could hear you," said Mildred.

"He shall hear me," said Noreen.

After a few days Heber was brought home and installed as an invalid in the prettiest room in the cottage, made particularly attractive for his reception. His mother waited on him, and Honoria kept in the background. People came to see him about the business of the ship. The firm of engineers was disappointed. Heber was impatient to be up and away with them, but there he was, tethered to a sofa. Worse than the breakdown of his work was the bitter fact that Honoria had witnessed his failure, and was lost to him through it.

"He is sadly moped," said Mildred. "Nothing I say seems to comfort him."

"He needs a scolding," said Honoria; "let me give it to him."

"You are not the best person to give it to him," said Mildred a little reproachfully.

"Oh, yes, I am! There is no one else to do it. Mothers spoil their sons, friends have not courage

to speak the truth, and other people don't care enough."

"And as you are neither a spoiling mother, nor a cowardly friend, nor one of the people who don't care—what, then, are you, that you should interfere?"

"Only an old comrade," said Honoria. "Come, Mother, let me take Heber his tea this afternoon, and rouse him up a bit."

"You shall do so if you like. But if you find him cross, don't quarrel with the poor lad, Noreen. He has had several things to trouble him."

Noreen smiled, and began to put on a white frilled apron, and to get ready a dainty repast of tea and hot teacakes and fruit. She smiled too much for the occasion, Mildred thought, but her smiles were certainly lovely.

"Am I nice enough?" she said, suddenly catching Mildred's eye and offering her face to be kissed.

"Too nice, I fear," said Mildred, and Honoria laughed and seized her tray.

"I am afraid she is a bit of a coquette after all," sighed the mother as she turned away; "but who can prevent a girl from feeling her power, or blame her for an innocent pleasure in exercising it?"

"Come in," said Heber, in answer to a knock on his door. His mother did not knock before entering.

"It's me," said Honoria. "Pray excuse the grammar! Don't you remember we used to say that 'me' sounded so much more friendly and comfortable than 'I'?"

"This is too great an honour, Lady Honoria," said Heber grimly.

"Do you want me to stamp my foot and say that I am not Lady Anybody?"

"I remember you used to stamp your foot for emphasis, but I thought you had given it up. Living in high circles ought to have taught you manners."

"A bad habit will come back on great provocation," said Noreen, arranging the table. "But I am coming with peaceful intentions, not for war. I am going to have my tea with you. Do you remember when we boiled our kettle on a fire of driftwood between the rocks, and drank our tea out of scallop shells, with the wild goats staring at us? Shall I pour out the tea for you now, or would you rather play host, and give me some?"

"Men don't make tea," growled Heber.

"Not if they have somebody else to do it for them. Well, I am somebody else, and you shall have it good, if you promise not to be so grumpy."

"Am I grumpy?"

"A little. But I admit that a broken leg——"

"Hang the broken leg! It's the broken ship, the smashed-up enterprise."

"Well, I am astonished! The idea of your pretending that your enterprise was broken up! I should like to see your face if I or anyone else were to make such a statement. But we couldn't. Don't we know that as soon as you can stand up again on your two feet you will put the thing right!"

"I boasted that I could excel all others in flight. I went up like a rocket and I came down like a stick."

"And your vanity is hurt."

"Vanity!"

'Yes. What else should make the thing such a deadly business?"

Heber's face burned. His pride would not let him say: "It was for your sake. I staked my hope of happiness on my success. You are the last who should reproach me if I am grumpy."

"Let us change the conversation," he said. "Will you give me another cup of tea? It is very good of you to come and pity me. How is Rolf?"

"I have not seen him for a week. But I shall probably see him to-morrow."

"That will be very pleasant for you. I hope he won't be grumpy."

"I don't think he will, for he is very happy."

"Doubtless."

"I promised him to go and see Ettie Western to-morrow."

"Anything at all to please him, I am sure. The Westerns are friends of his, I remember. You are right to cultivate them."

"Ettie is a dear girl, and I am fond of her on her own account, without considering Rolf."

"Miss Ettie is a very nice little girl, but I think if I were Rolf I should not be so much occupied with her at present," said Heber bitterly. He was getting impatient of the turn the conversation had taken.

"What? Not even if you were engaged to be married to her?" said Honoria demurely.

"An impossible case, as he isn't," said Heber.

"Your mother warned me that you would be cross," said Honoria, "but I did not think you would get to the point of refusing to believe the known truth. Why shouldn't Ettie and Rolf be engaged to be married? And why should I be jeered at for being willing to go to see my cousin's fiancée?"

Heber sat up, and his cup clattered down on the tray.

"Noreen!"

"Well, Heber, why are you so excited about it? Were you dreaming of marrying Ettie yourself? I won't tell Rolf, because he might be jealous."

"Was I dreaming? Oh, yes, I have been dreaming, but it was not about Ettie Western! You know whom I was dreaming of, Lady Honoria. Speak!"

"I won't speak, so long as you call me Lady Honoria."

"Noreen, then. Are you not engaged to Rolf?"

"You are provoking. Ettie and I could hardly be in partnership in such a case. If I had been engaged to Rolf I should not have displeased Lord Gytrash."

"Was your refusal the cause of that breach?"

"It was the very cause."

Heber was silent, gazing, and waiting on her words.

"So you must understand that I am not that dreadful thing a million-heiress, and that it is rather ridiculous to keep calling me Lady Honoria. I am simply Noreen Turbary, a wild girl from Connaught, a waif and stray taken in by your mother for charity——"

"Noreen!"

"And I intend in future to occupy myself as Mr. Ferrall's secretary——"

"Noreen, put me out of pain. You know well that I love you. You know all it meant for me that the ship should be an immediate success. If it had been I should have fought Rolf to get you. But now——"

"Now that there is no Rolf to fight——"

"Now that the ship is a failure——"

"It is not a failure."

"For the hour it is, in the eyes of the world. If

it had been an instant triumph, promising honour and prosperity—would you—would you——?"

"What?"

"Have given me your love and your promise?"

"Oh, you foolish boy! What have such sacred, happy things to do with the going up or coming down of an airship? Did you think I was to be bought with your honours and your prosperity?"

"Noreen, I can't move; will you come nearer to me?"

He stretched out his hands imploringly.

"Come!" he said; "come!"

She drew a little nearer, and a little nearer, a step at a time. Two pairs of eyes were shining on each other with supreme gladness.

Then the door opened, and Mildred came in. She glanced from Heber to Noreen, and from Noreen to Heber.

"What has happened?" she asked.

"Everything," said Heber exultantly.

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"'COME!' HE SAID; 'COME!'"

CHAPTER XLIII

"I Believe in Headlong Youth"

A DAY or two later Lord Gytrash arrived at the cottage and found Mildred alone.

"I want to see this runaway daughter of mine," he said. "A nice thing, to take advantage of my absence to escape from my control! And you, madam, have aided and abetted her by taking her in!"

"She believes that she displeased you, my lord. She came to me for harbour, and of course I gave it to her."

"Harboured her from the enemy, as you did in earlier days? You don't remind me of it, but my memory is good enough. Well, perhaps I am not so much the enemy as she takes me to be. Do I look very angry? Is she prepared to come home with me now and consent to marry her cousin, and become Countess of Finbarr?"

"I don't think so, my lord," said Mildred, smiling. Something in his droll manner assured her that no trouble was to come of this visit.

"Why do you not think so?"

"Because, my lord, Noreen is engaged to marry my son."

"Hello!" cried Lord Gytrash, pulling down his brows in a portentous frown.

"I have had nothing to do with it," said Mildred.

"You needn't tell me, madam. Neither you nor anybody else could influence that young woman. She has a will that can overmaster weaklings and meeklings like you and me. So this was the meaning of her opposition to me, and running away to you."

"No; she never showed any favour to Heber till his ship broke down."

"Ha! When I saw it I guessed that would bring matters to a crisis."

"What do you mean, my lord?"

"Do you think I am so dull as not to have seen what was taking place? Our little girl is no fair-weather friend. Her heart has been with you and this clever lad of yours from the beginning. I tested her well with bribes, and she was not to be bought."

"Then you were not in favour of her marriage with her cousin after all?"

"Such a marriage would have suited family plans, and would have pleased me if it had made her happy. I confess I did not expect her to do anything but what she has done."

"She will be glad to hear that, my lord."

"And now, I suppose, she will be all for going back to Connaught, and walking the rocks barefoot, and sitting in caves while that wild high-flyer of yours dreams over new sky-flights and new come-downs. Is that the programme, Mrs. O'Donovan?"

"They intend to stay in the workshop at present. Heber has discovered the hitch in his machine, and will put it right. He will certainly go up again before long."

"Sweep the cobwebs off the sky, I suppose, and

write a book to tell us what the moon is really made of, if not green cheese? By the way, I want to tell him that he is late for the North Pole. A common watership is on its way home, we hear, having in its old-fashioned, lumbering way reached the point of Heber's ambition."

"We have heard of it. Mr. Ferrall and Heber are much excited about it. But nothing is assured as yet."

"They will have a story to tell, at all events, and Heber can pick holes in it, and go off to see if all they say be true. Then he can gather up such crumbs as they have left behind, and come back with any amount of penguins' feathers in his cap, or his wings, and start new theories about whatever thing it is that the world revolves on. And I shouldn't wonder if Lady Honoria would undertake to be the man at the wheel, in order to find her long-lost father, and cut off the rejected Rolf from becoming Earl of Finbarr."

"You can't say that she rejected Rolf, my lord. He was engaged to Miss Western before Honoria was engaged to Heber."

"I see you know all about it, and any scolding of mine is mere waste of breath. If we elders were as iron-willed and bigoted as our youngers are, what a terrible world it would be! I want you to understand, Mrs. O'Donovan, that I intend to befriend all these young people equally. I believe in headlong youth. If it were as timid as it may become with years, nothing big would ever contrive to be done."

"You are a good man, Lord Gytrash."

"Don't praise me, or I shall turn mischievous immediately. I want to see our girl. Where is she?"

"Gone for a motor drive with Mr. Ferrall, she, and Heber, and the Major, and Kerrigan. By the way, the motor is the Major's. He is able to enjoy it now, and, better still, to enjoy taking his friends out of London into the country by means of it."

"I see. A nice party of wild Irish! I hope my old friend will not stick in another bog——"

"My lord, you have some Irish blood in your own veins, or you wouldn't be of the Turbary family——"

"I will not be taunted with my infirmity, madam. Whatever I am you have got to do with me. At present I have enough work on my shoulders. I have to manage Mrs. Emmeline Turbary, who is almost in fits at the thought of her son marrying the penniless Miss Western, believing that he will be my sole heir and Earl of Finbarr. I have to satisfy Lady Western that her daughter (who, by the way, has a very nice independent fortune of her own, a piece of information I withheld from Mrs. Emmeline) has not engaged herself to a rather dull young man with no prospects. Then I have a good deal to say to my Lady Noreen, and a few words to your Heber."

"Will you not wait for their return? I can offer you a modest dinner. It will not be the first time you accepted my frugal hospitality."

"And never had I such appetite in my life as when we were all squeezed into that little house, with the wicked bog surging round us, and food so hard to procure. It was an experience worth living, even for its own sake. But my time is too precious at present. My plan is to gather all these wilful people in together to a lunch in London, time and place to be decided on, and to have a general talk, squabble, making up friends,

anything you please. I will write to them about it to-morrow."

The party came off, and the whimsical millionaire had his word with each of his guests in turn, as he wished, and with all of them together besides.

To Honoria he said: "My dear, I will help your high-flying hero to mount to the stars on condition that you come back to me until we are ready for the wedding. He tells me you are not to be married till the airship has proved itself successful. Very good. I'm not going to say how long a lease that gives me of your daughtership, but you are to stay with me till the moment arrives. Meanwhile he must be with us as much as his precious engagements permit, for we shall have to put our heads together about settlements and other matters."

"My lord," said Noreen, laughing, "how will you ensure us against the amazement of Mrs. Turbary?"

"She shall know my mind at once," said his lordship, "and if she begins to annoy either of my pairs of youngsters I will threaten her with being promptly boarded out. I shall propose settling her in a lodging beside Major Turbary, with a commission from me to relieve Kerrigan very frequently in looking after the invalid. If that does not bring her to a proper sense of the conduct expected of her, I shall have to think of other measures."

"It will be rather amusing to see Cousin Emmeline accommodating herself to the new situations," said Noreen. "How she did love me for just a little while!"

"She will now have to love Miss Ettie, and I have no doubt she will be able to do it after I have made

a few communications to her. Miss Ettie has promised to be my guest at the Towers also, and Rolf, of course, is to be like a tame cat about the place. Mrs. O'Donovan and Mr. Ferrall will look in on us, and perhaps the Duchess of Doldrums, who has returned from Egypt with her village in her pocket, will come down to entertain us with some notes of her experiences."

"If anything could console Cousin Emmeline for my return to your favour it would be the Duchess's visit," said Honoria, "especially as dear Ettie has got that independent fortune."

"Now, don't be too sharp, my young lady! Leave me to deal with her."

"My wits have been so accustomed to having to protect me from her that I may have some trouble in making them understand that their interference is no longer needed," said Noreen, laughing.

So there was a house party at Tam Towers that autumn, a more happy and genial gathering than had ever before met within those hospitable walls. Even Mrs. Turbary enjoyed herself, though sorely disappointed at Honoria's return to her guardian's favour, which meant the dividing of "Rolf's patrimony" with Heber, the farmer's son. The presence of the dear Duchess and the assurance of Ettie's very proper dowry were two consoling facts. She was a ready listener to her grace's lamentations over the unreasonable expectations and requirements of the people whom she had taken to Egypt and had been obliged to bring back again.

"An age of conventionality," said the Duchess. "Even the poorest bitten with the desire for luxury.

The idea of expecting a village tree in the middle of the desert!"

"Is it true that the portable church melted down?" asked someone.

"Not exactly," said the Duchess. "But I confess it got very hot, red-hot, I might say. But that was only a trifle. We had several kinds of convenient arrangements, and after a few generations everything would have turned out quite comfortable. However, the people would come home, and here they are now, grumbling about the disturbance of their affairs and the upsetting of their homes. I really don't know what the world is coming to, Mrs. Turbary. All one's efforts to benefit one's fellow-creatures seem unavailing."

Another source of pleasure to Emmeline was the opportunity of twitting Heber with the fiasco of his airship.

"Such a disappointment after all your trouble! But vaulting ambition overleaps itself, as Martin Tupper says."

Somebody tittered.

"When I was a girl I was very fond of Tupper. Of course, he is out of fashion now."

"Heber never heard of him," put in Mr. Ferrall.

"Oh, he must be very ignorant if he has never heard those words about vaulting ambition! They are so well known as a quotation."

"So they are," said Mr. Ferrall. "Heber, I am ashamed that you are not better versed in your Martin Tupper."

CHAPTER XLIV

A Great Trip

HEBER declined all invitations to be of the house party. He was resolved not to appear again among his friends till he had righted his ship and wiped out his failure. Honoria had a letter from him every day, but even to her he said little about the work. His mother remained by his side, and kept his counsel.

One morning, at breakfast, Lord Gytrash, who had been scanning the papers, made a sudden exclamation.

"Hello!" he cried. "Here's news. Allow me to rub my eyes and my spectacles!"

All eyes were turned on him. Some said "What?" and some said "Who?" and some said "How?"

"Heber has done it!" said his lordship, "has flown five hundred miles as a short trip, and only come down, I suppose, to get a cheer. Has done it in no time at all—travelled as fast as Halley's comet. You may read the account for yourselves, my friends. I conclude it is in all the papers."

"Humph!" said Mrs. Turbary.

"I confess I am incredulous," said the Duchess. "I am too old a traveller——"

"Glorious! glorious!" Rolf was murmuring, as he

tossed over the papers, gleaning the paragraphs. "I always knew he would do it."

Two large tears stood in Honaria's eyes. She winked them off, and after a minute or two quietly left the room. Ettie finished her breakfast hastily and followed her.

"Do you believe it?" asked Emmeline of Lord Gytrash.

"Even allowing for exaggeration there has evidently been a triumph," he answered, in a tone that for him was very serious.

"Well," said the Duchess, "I can only say I am glad I was not on board. I have been in all kinds of uncomfortable locomotives, from an Alpine climbing railway to a first-class motor, but I draw the line at wings."

"That is a pity," said Mr. Ferrall, "seeing what great weight your grace could have added——"

The Duchess, conscious of the number of her stones in the scale, erected her double chin and stared at the speaker.

"Added to the importance of the triumph," said Ferrall, bowing.

"But, your grace," said Emmeline, "you enjoy your splendid motor."

"To a certain extent. But I confess I like movement without snorting and screaming and shocks to one's nerves. And I never can get accustomed to the murdering of the children. To my mind there is no travelling so delightful as a ride on a camel's back across the desert."

The Duchess was not one of those genial persons who can enjoy being laughed at to increase the general mirth,

so all eyes were quickly turned away from the picture presented to the imagination by her words, and smiles were repressed. One person, who could not restrain a laugh, immediately made it understood to have been caused by a recurring sense of delight at the wonderful achievement of Heber O'Donovan.

It was soon proved that there was no doubt of the perfect success of the O'Donovan airship. The secret of the birds' flight had been discovered, and the principle applied by human ingenuity to the movement of insensible matter, capable of supporting human or animal bodies upon the air and in contest with opposing winds. No more disastrous drops into the sea, no more smashing up of bones by sudden terrible descents in impossible places, nothing but plain sailing and infallible steering, gay departures and merry arrivals. Distance was derided as a dreary kill-joy, a miserable old bogy that had too long separated friends, retarded progress, denied desire and aspiration, and was now to be put out of a world which had been so stupidly enslaved to its tyranny.

Acclamations poured in from all sides. Newspapers were eloquent, and heavy periodical articles were written asserting that distance had long been relegated by thinking minds to the Hades of all old-world superstitions; man had nothing to do henceforth but to order his car and fly round his little territory of this globe, and come home again dissatisfied because he had no more worlds to overfly and circumferate.

Meanwhile there was great joy at the cottage, whither Honoria hastened in response to Heber's eager summons.

"Come and rejoice with me," he said, "you who have

always believed in me, and have been my inspiration and my help. I have only a few days' interval before I start for further trips."

"Oh, yes, run away and congratulate him!" said Lord Gytrash. "He deserves a good word. Take my compliments with you, and tell him that as soon as he condescends to walk this earth again I shall expect him to come here and tell me all about it."

Noreen found Heber glowing with joy in his success, and hungry for her sympathy, of which she did not stint him. Mildred took the good fortune quietly, as she had taken all haps since the early days of scare and tribulation that had driven her feet from the primrose path of her girlhood to a strange foothold in the bare and barren places of a difficult world. The son she had reared in her seclusion between the mountains and the sea, who seemed destined for nothing but to farm the rock and to fish the breaker, was now a famous man, distinguished by the learned and the men of science, and congratulated by the powerful and the proud. It was all in the order of God's providence. Her boy had been chosen as one to carry on the progress of the world, and to take part in developing the wonderful works of his Creator.

A great trip had been organized to prove further the thoroughly reliable powers of the O'Donovan airship. Heber and a few select companions were to traverse the whole aerial surface of Europe, visiting each capital in turn, and receiving the congratulations and accepting the entertainment and the homage of all the cities. And after that there were the more remote and hitherto inaccessible regions of the earth to be explored and exploited.

Lord Gytrash was not content with having sent his messages by Honoria, but came on the scene of triumph in great good humour. At one moment his enthusiasm carried him to the point of determination to be one of Heber's European expedition; but at the last moment he admitted that he was a man of unstable purpose, and asked to be excused for his caprice.

"I feel that I am of the earth, earthy," he said, "and that my tendency to gravitation is too strong for any wings that ever were spread under the heavens. If I were chained to Heber's deck I believe I should drop through all impediments, and be lost as ballast to the ship. And as ballast I am sufficiently ponderous to be dangerously missed out of the reckonings."

"All right, my lord," said Heber. "Such valuable ballast could not be afforded. Something less costly to the world of humanity and kindness must do for us."

"This fellow of yours has been to Blarney," said his lordship, turning on Honoria. "I hope he will be making as sweet speeches to his wife when he is as old as I am, who have no wife at all, and have to waste my sweetness on impertinent youngsters!"

Heber's preparations were soon made, and the evening before the start he and Noreen sat together talking of the present and the future with all the enthusiasm that sanguine mind and joyous temperament can kindle in youth, even without the promise of a real rainbow, visible to other eyes besides its own.

"And after all this, the trip to the Arctic!" said Heber. "Long ago I vowed to go in search of your father, Noreen, and I will do it."

"Alas," said Noreen, "that was only a dream! If he were alive, would he not have returned? There have been many expeditions to the Arctic, and some must have found him. If his spirit be watching us, Heber, would he not be grieved to see you sacrificed—perhaps for a vain idea—to see my great loss in you for no gain in him——?"

"What!" said Heber. "Are you losing faith? How should I be sacrificed? I propose to fly all around the Pole, with a dip here and a dip there—no fear, no danger. The Earl may be living disabled, in some region among the polar-bear people, fed on blubber and oil, and making the best of it. And, besides, I want to be the first to find the Pole."

"What do you suppose it will be like? A magnetic flagstaff, rooted in the centre of the earth? A green oasis, chiefly fruit and flower garden? A singing wood, a rock of lodestone, a prodigious maelstrom——"

Heber laughed. "Nobody knows," he said; "nobody will know till somebody has gone, seen, and conquered. I want to be that somebody. What if I should find your father, like a Robinson Crusoe, seated in a Garden of Eden, training birds and weaving lilies, sleeping in a wigwam of vines and roses, and playing music on reed pipes of Arctic growth shining like gold in the sunshine?"

Honoria smiled, and then they both laughed at the rhapsody.

"And what if the Polar area should prove to be the real old original Garden of Eden, still growing the apple of knowledge eaten by Eve, and kept hidden from us because of our naughtiness?"

"Hum!" said Heber. "Do you think I am good

enough to be picked out of the human race as the man to retrace our steps to that Garden?"

"I think you are good enough for anything," said Honoria.

"A compliment from a usually uncomplimenting person is worth something," said Heber delightedly. "But I confess that in the matter of compliments it is rather a large order. However, suppose I find the Garden of Eden at the North Pole, what will be the consequences? If the apple of the tree of knowledge be still growing there and bearing fruit, don't you think that every man will prove a true son of Eve by running to eat of it?"

"I am afraid he would," said Noreen.

"And the world would return to darkness. So I think I shall look out for a flagstaff instead of a garden," said Heber. "I don't want the responsibility of making myself the pioneer of a short-cut road for latter-day sons of Eve to travel by back to perdition."

"Oh, poor Father!" cried Noreen. "Our fantastic romancing has carried us a long way from any honest hope of finding him."

"I don't know that," said Heber. "Cloud-castle building does no practical man or woman a scrap of harm. It only cools and airs the brain, like windows and door thrown open in a narrowed-up room. When the apertures have to be closed again the heavenly airs from the woods and hills are still hovering about the tables and chairs and bookshelves."

CHAPTER XLV

A One-man Experience

HEBER'S expedition departed, and its visitation of the cities of Europe was a succession of triumphs. Marconi telegrams were flying all over the world announcing the arrivals and departures of the wonderful O'Donovan airship. Kings and all manner of potentates were entertaining Heber, and millionaires were at his feet with offers to purchase his secret. Only two persons had still some anxiety as to the end of the undertaking. Mildred and Honoria, clinging together in the cottage, and mindful of a hundred disasters to the ambitious, listened eagerly for news from hour to hour, and from one slow-moving minute to another.

On their state of tension Lord Gytrash burst in, full of excitement.

"Have you heard of it? Heber is done——" he began. "What, what? White faces! No! Nonsense! He is all right. Only one of his pet ambitions is knocked on the head. The North Pole has been discovered!"

The colour began to return to Mildred's lips.

"Eheu! What creatures mothers are! Get a glass of wine, Noreen. You are not Heber's mother evidently."

"I believe in him," said Noreen, but her own lips were not much less blanched than the mother's.

"Extremely impertinent of these Americans to cut

in and deprive Heber of his rights! And doing the business in the humdrum, old-fashioned way, with common water-ships, and dogs, and sledges. Turning up at the last moment, just to take the winner's prize out of your son's hands, Mrs. O'Donovan."

Mildred, still white from shock, smiled.

"We shall survive all that, my lord," she said. "Heber has had enough success for any young man to begin with."

"Now, don't pretend that the mother's soul within you is not rejoiced. Candidly, did you ever like the idea of that Polar trip?"

"He will go, however," said Honoria. "He will want to see for himself. Heber will feel no jealousy of the winners who have reached the post before him. His mind is not small——"

"And by and by you will be tripping away with him to take special notes of whether the Pole is an iron pole, or a pot-metal pole, or a wooden stake——"

Here Mr. Ferrall arrived on the scene with fresh intelligence.

"I am before you, sir," said his lordship. "You are come to tell us that Queen Anne is dead, I suppose."

"Have you seen the latest telegrams?" asked Ferrall.

"Suppose I haven't, what then?"

"Oh, only a few more particulars of the returned American expedition! It seems they picked up and have brought home with them a lost and strayed man, said to be an Englishman, whom they found living, quite impossibly as it would seem, in some region of bears and bear-like humans."

Honoria fixed her eyes on Ferrall.

"I don't know more than that," he said, in answer to the eager question in her face.

Lord Gytrash looked from one to the other, and suddenly understood.

"No name given?" he asked.

"None, as yet. It is probably some poor fellow whose name is of no importance."

"He will soon be made important, however, for he will have a story to tell," said Gytrash. "And he must be no common man who made his way to these regions and contrived to live to come back as a survival of enormous hardships and difficulties. But, hello, tears! Lady Honoria. I haven't seen her cry since the old days when she stamped her foot at me."

"I am sorry for this news," said Mildred tenderly. "She will be imagining most unlikely things."

"Eheu! I wish I had been her father!" said his lordship. "To feel so much for a father unknown, what would it have been for a father always on the spot——?"

Honoria laughed through her tears. "Let me alone," she said; "I suppose there is something in Nature not to be explained. I don't jump to the conclusion that my father is found, but I certainly feel a pitiful kindness towards the man who has lived just such a life as his, and suffered all that he must have suffered."

"Good!" said Lord Gytrash. "See to this, Mrs. O'Donovan. If this fellow turns up, Heber may be jilted for him before all is over."

Noreen laughed outright, and everyone joined her, feeling that mirth is so much pleasanter than melancholy sentiment.

"And now that we may speak of it, what have they found at the North Pole after all? Is there to be a wonderful revelation of a mysterious region, unknown and variously imagined?"

"I hear they found nothing at all but ice and rocks, and slush of snow and water," said Ferrall.

"What? Not a pole to hang a rag to dry on? No flagstaff to hoist a flag? After all the rivalry of the nations, the loss of life, and bleaching of bones, to have nothing to report but a puddle, such as one can have on a winter day at home in one's native village, when the pond is frozen!"

"I can't help it, my lord," said Ferrall; "I didn't make the world. An Arctic of snow and slush does me just as well as a maelstrom or a winter garden."

"And so the mystery of what we turn on is as great as ever."

"I suppose so. For me, I don't care, so long as we keep turning. Considering that I don't know what keeps myself turning, from morning till night and from night till morning, sleeping and waking, I can't say I'm profoundly surprised that the Creator guards also His rights with respect to His other mysteries."

"You go deep," said his lordship. "Ferrall, you are a wise philosopher. But now for the evening papers! The Marconis will be sending us something every hour."

The next great event for the anxious women in the cottage was the arrival of a letter from Heber to Noreen, saying that his tour of the European cities was concluded, and that he was starting for America to interview the successful Polar explorers.

"I am particularly curious," he said, "on the subject

of the derelict traveller picked up in the course of their wanderings. I hear he is a poor, broken creature, and is lying in a hospital in New York. I know the thoughts that will arise in your mind; but we must not let our imagination run too fast."

Soon after a telegram announced the arrival in New York of the O'Donovan airship, and it was followed as quickly as possible by another letter, giving Heber's first impressions of the members of the returned expedition, and most especially of his visit to the sufferer in the hospital.

"He is a large man," wrote Heber, "quite emaciated; face almost covered with hair; lies with closed eyes and does not speak. Seems in a state of collapse. Impossible to tell his age, and no one knows his name. But the doctors think he will recover. Perfect repose and judicious administering of nourishment are all that are required at present. I go to see him every day, watching for some change. I hope he will not die till we have heard something from him of his experiences."

"I can't see my father in that poor creature," said Noreen tearfully. But she watched as eagerly as Heber for further intelligence.

Heber's next report was as follows:—

"Our derelict traveller begins to revive. The doctors say he is only of middle age, with a fine frame, and that the treatment will restore him. Since he has been shaven and trimmed up he looks a different creature. He has handsome features and a remarkable head. He says a few words now and again, asks a question, and relapses into silence. He has not told his name. When

asked, he said: 'What does it matter? I am practically a dead man.'

"'No,' I said, 'you are alive, and your life is important. You have had great experiences, and the world will want to hear about them.'

"He looked at me with the ghost of a smile.

"'I have done nothing worth a record,' he said.

"'You gave your years and your strength,' I said, 'to exploring unknown regions for the benefit of humanity?'

"He nodded.

"'Is that nothing?' I said.

"'Results are what signify. I am no more than any of the skeletons that lie bleaching on the ice rocks—men who gave all and gained nothing.'

"The doctors warned me not to worry him while in this mood of nervous depression. People wonder at my persistent interest in him. You will understand it. There is no doubt he is an Irishman and a gentleman. More I dare not conclude at present, but I shall not desist until I have won his entire confidence."

Heber's letters continued at short intervals.

"I sit with my reticent invalid traveller day after day, and I am considered very singular in concerning myself more with him than with the successful men who are fêted and entertained in the city. The patient himself said to me this morning:

"'You are not a doctor, nor a nurse. What is the reason of your interest in me?'

"'Several reasons,' I said. 'I am a bit of an explorer myself, and hope to do more in that way. My mode of travel is by way of the air.'

"'The air?' he said. 'You don't mean——?'

"'I do,' I said. 'How long have you been off the tracks of civilization?'

"'Eighteen years,' he said.

"'Well, we have bridled the winds since that date. What was your own method of getting about and overcoming distance?'

"'By sea, in a vessel, first, of course; then dogs and sledges, till the sledges broke up and the dogs died, and I found myself alone, having lost my party. Then I crawled about, half-dead, till some strange beings, half Eskimos, half polar bears, found me and carried me to their lair. I was long ill in their hands, and they were good to me, and fed me on as much fish oil as I could swallow, which, somehow, kept me alive. I had left all my belongings that I had managed to carry behind in a crevasse, and I was nothing but a poor, ragged body, which they had wrapped in their bearskins.'

"'And there you lived till the Europeans came and picked you up?' I said.

"'There I lived. It was a strange life. If I were to write a book about it all it would make curious reading.'

"'You will do it,' I said.

"'These other men will do it better. They will have the acclamations of the world to inspire them, and its ear to listen to them.'

"'A one-man experience like yours would be worth it all.'

"'And they have wives and children and friends to be interested.'

"'You will have friends. Have you no wife, no children? Then you may have them yet.'

"'I had a wife, for a short happy time. She died. I had a child for a few days. It also died. I have no heart to begin life over again.'

"I left him then, as he had relapsed into silence."

Only two days after receiving the above from Heber, Noreen had another page from his diary.

"My patient welcomed me to-day with more animation than I had seen in him before. His first remark to me was:

"'You said you had more reasons than one for your interest in me. You gave me one. What are the others?'

"'I am an Irishman,' I said. 'So are you.'

"'How do you know that?' he asked.

"'The Eskimo-bear folk have not altogether trained away that little touch of brogue which is often found even in the best-regulated families, as the saying is,' I said, laughing.

"'What do you know about my family?' he asked.

"'Are you not the Earl of Finbarr?' I said quietly.

"He started as if I had given him an electric shock, opened his eyes wide, and looked at me fixedly. Then he closed them again without speaking, and lay without making further sign.

"I waited, feeling that he would speak if I were patient long enough. I made no sound, and after some time he opened his eyes again and said:

"'Oh, you are there still! I thought you had gone away.'

"'I am here still,' I said, smiling.

"Presently he said abruptly:

"'How did you find me out?'

"'It did not require much cleverness,' I said. 'You have been long missing, but never forgotten.'

"'I have no friends,' he said. 'Property wasted and gone, dissipated by those who went before me; wife dead, child——'

"'Living,' I put in boldly.

"'No. There your knowledge fails,' he said. 'Child died just before I sailed——'

"'So you thought. So they thought who sent you the news. The child recovered.'

"'You mean to tell me this as an undoubted truth?' he said eagerly.

"'An undoubted truth. The Lady Honoria Turbary lives in the hope of being restored to her father.'

"An extraordinary change passed over him. A glow rose to his face, and a light came into his eyes.

"'Honoria?' he said. 'My mother's name. Those who loved her used to call her Noreen.'

"'History repeats itself,' I said. 'The Lady Honoria is also called by that sweeter name by those who love her, and they are many. You will find her a daughter to love you and to be beloved.'

"He was silent, and I noticed that his face had gradually grown very white. He had fainted. I called the nurse and told her what had happened to excite him.

"'The heart is still weak,' she said, 'but there is no disease.' In a few minutes he was restored to consciousness. The nurse came to me where I was waiting in another room.

"'He has fallen asleep,' she said. 'You must not see him again till to-morrow.'

"And now, my Noreen, I feel that you have been gradually prepared for this happy news, and I will not delay to send it on to you. As soon as your father is pronounced fit for the voyage I shall put him on board my ship and take him home to you."

CHAPTER XLVI

A Credit to the Ogres

THE public announcement that the long-lost Arctic traveller, the Earl of Finbarr, had been found in the half-famished man picked up by the successful Polar exploring expedition caused a considerable sensation, and the fact that he had returned to England in the wonderful new O'Donovan airship added intensity to the general excitement.

Many romantic paragraphs appeared in the papers, and portraits more or less impossible were scanned with curiosity in the illustrated periodicals—the Earl before washing and shaving, and the Earl after washing and shaving; O'Donovan in his airship and without his airship; the Lady Honoria Turbary, one of the beauties presented at Court last season; and the well-known, bountiful Lord Gytrash, the guardian of the Lady Honoria, with others more or less incidentally interesting.

Lord Gytrash insisted that Heber should land his ship near Tam Towers rather than near London, and he summoned Mildred and Noreen to help him to welcome his long-lost kinsman under his roof. It was a thrilling moment for all when the Earl, leaning on Heber's arm, walked in among his relatives and friends,

looking in their faces with eyes that might have been the eyes of some ghostly visitant from another world beholding the scenes of his long-past earthly existence.

Soon, however, the ice melted from his heart, the rigidity that had almost paralysed him bodily dropped away like chains from his limbs, and he became more like a living, breathing human being. With his daughter sitting at his feet and holding his cold hands in her warm young grasp his blood gradually seemed to thaw, and when at last she ventured to throw her arms round his neck, and lay her cheek against his, the natural life within him began to throb and glow. After some time happy associations and successful medical treatment completely restored his health, and he was found to be a man in the prime of a vigorous maturity.

It was only by degrees that he learned the whole story of Noreen's childhood and youth. Everyone concerned in the matter gave a contribution. Honoria described the kindness of all her friends, beginning with faithful old Mauria, who had brought her to Connaught. Mildred spoke of the joy brought into her own life by the affection of the girl. Ferrall told of the pleasure he had taken in educating her. Lord Gytrash abused himself and the Major for the rough welcome they had given her in the beginning.

"We didn't believe in her," he said. "None of us had ever heard of your marriage. We behaved abominably to the good old soul who brought her to us as one of our kindred."

"But you were generous to her afterwards," said Noreen; "you made her last days happy and comfortable."

"The least I could do, and all too late. Well, Finbarr, I don't know what our brutal incredulity would have ended in only for the extraordinary likeness to yourself which even our stupid eyes could see in your daughter."

"I am wonderfully flattered," said the Earl, looking tenderly at Noreen's radiant face and sunny hair.

"Oh, I don't say there is much likeness now!" said Gytrash. "But she was then exceedingly like the young man we remembered as our Cousin Finbarr. And I must say the spirit and temper of the young lady in maintaining the right to her title, and persisting in her belief that her father was still among the living, had a considerable effect in overpowering the pair of ogres who had her in their hands."

"She does infinite credit to the ogres, however they handled her," said the Earl.

"A rough training," said Gytrash. "No boy in a public school ever had a rougher. However, thanks to a few other human beings of a different species, your girl was not quite at our mercy."

"And what am I to think of your over-generosity to my girl?" said Finbarr. "She tells me you have pampered her and loaded her with your riches so that I do not know how she is to reconcile herself to such a future as I can give her."

"My dear fellow, neither you nor I can altogether undertake her future. One of the most famous men of his day is, as you know, our friend Heber O'Donovan——"

"Ah!" said Finbarr; "I thought so."

"She did not tell you at once, that you might as long as possible feel her altogether your own——"

"I see. Well, I am not without something to give her as a dowry. In my old bearskin coat, in which I lived as in my own skin, there is a pouch, and in it are some stones which I think will prove valuable. I grubbed them up out of a glittering icy rock. Some convulsion of Nature had apparently split the rocks, and the stones I saw giving forth a dazzling light from the rift were, I believe, diamonds. I stored a handful in my pouch, and they have remained there ever since. If they prove to be diamonds—well, my daughter and her husband need not be troubled with poverty."

Lord Gytrash laughed. The idea of diamonds out of icebergs seemed to him too funny. But his impulse was to humour the fancy of this man who had returned to life destitute of everything but the bearskin wrapper he had been found in.

"My good fellow," he said, "if you think you can take the endowment of my foster-daughter Noreen out of my hands, or, rather, my ogre's paws, to fill her lap with your Aladdin's jewels, I shall have to fight you. However, the duel need not take place till you are a bit stronger."

"Nor until we have had a look at the stones," said Finbarr.

Heber laughed when he heard of the contents of the pouch.

"Do you remember how in the fairy tale the gems found by the hero turned to glass when they had left the magic cavern? Let us leave the poor man in

possession of his happy delusion as long as possible. I dare say chips of iceberg in the sun may look like enough to diamonds."

The Earl continued to ask for his bearskin wrapper, and when the pouch was emptied of its contents the spectators stood amazed. Certainly, if iceberg in crumb could appear like these splendours of stone, then Polar regions ought to he one blaze of perpetual glory.

Little time was lost in appealing to the decision of experts. The result gave pause of wonder to everyone concerned.

"These diamonds are of the purest water," was the assurance given. "If the Earl has found them as described, he has been carrying a huge fortune about with him in his pouch of bearskin."

The sudden change from a state of destitution to great opulence had no bewildering or deteriorating effect on the Earl of Finbarr, who, on realizing it, merely remarked with a quiet smile that he might now, perhaps, be enabled to buy back his Irish estates, as he learned that the present owners were in need of money.

"And then we shall see what we can do to make poor lives happier," he said to Honoria; "whether the people prefer to remain as our tenants, or to be enabled to become their own masters."

Lord Gytrash pretended to sulk over the matter, though rejoiced at his friend's restoration to fortune as well as to life and health.

"A nice thing, to take the wind out of my sails in this manner!" he said. "Here am I, who used to be considered a great fellow in the matter of wealth, and now I am nowhere."

To Honoria this wonderful hap simply meant funds for Heber to work with in the development of his scientific practical schemes. She believed, as many did, that he was the coming genius of beneficent inventions, a faith which he has even already to a great extent justified. That he need not be thwarted or restrained by lack of capital, as many have been, was a delightful reflection, and she had the joy of knowing that her father's feeling in this matter was the same as her own.

"Even before I knew of the bond between you," said the Earl, "I had come to look on your Heber as a father looks on a son. It was he who sat by my bedside and called me back to life; he who revived my starved heart with comforting news, and carried me in his wonderful vehicle across half a world to restore me to my daughter."

Heber himself had a few words to say about the strange revolution in their affairs. To Noreen's raptures he replied:

"It is all very fine, my Lady Honoria, but it seems to me that an Earl's daughter and only heiress of untold wealth must be out of place by the side of a hard-working voyager and inventor such as I am and shall continue to be."

"Really!" said Noreen. "These are very sensible ideas. And, granted the case you put, what would you suggest as a suitable fate for such a young person?"

"Nothing I can think of would be good enough, I own," said Heber. "My imagination——"

"All runs to mechanical inventions — cannot con-

struct a career of magnificence for a young woman cast off by the person she most cares for——"

"Cast off?"

"Yes, sir. Is not that what you are trying to do? to cast me off, because you are flying so high that you find me an encumbrance?"

"No, madam. You are not putting the case fairly, or happily."

"I think I am. You are afraid you will have to take me about the world in your car, and that I shall be wanting to interfere with your grand schemes of flight, asking to be set down in Paris for a raid on the milliners' shops, or dropped on an ostrich farm to pick up feathers, or merely taking the place of ballast which you would need to cast out, while you did not altogether like to throw me overboard."

"Pray go on," said Heber. "This sketch of your probable future is very interesting."

"It is well that you should be warned in time. You don't want a high-flying wife, would rather live up in the clouds by yourself. Very well, sir, I will go back to the bogs with my father. Better walk the earth prosaically than ride with a god in a car, only to be tossed to the winds and fall like a meteorite into nowhere——"

"I see you are working yourself into a passion. I fear prosperity does not seem likely to agree with us. We did not quarrel when we sat together under the rocks——"

"And worked at your model. I had not then the presumption to appear likely to rise out of my condition of beggary——"

"Noreen!"

"You could pity me and patronize me, then, and——"

"Love you."

"And that is all over. You can't do it now, because my father can enable me to help you."

"You know that what you are saying is not true——"

"I see you are trying to pick a quarrel——"

"It is you who are quarrelling. But it takes two to make a quarrel."

"Heber!"

"Noreen!"

He had got hold of her hands.

"That is all very well, sir. But will you promise never to taunt me again with my—altered conditions?"

"I will promise anything, if you will only kiss and be friends!"

CHAPTER XLVII

The Latest from Emmeline

ABOUT all these surprising matters Mrs. Emmeline Turbary had some words to say in letters to her friend "Carrie" in India.

"I told you in my last," she wrote, "that I suspected this man to be an impostor. No one can be persuaded to share my doubts, and I have been laughed at for suggesting them. During my interval of silence things have certainly taken a new turn. So far from being an absolute beggar, he has, it appears, discovered a diamond mine, and has brought home enough diamonds to provide himself with wealth. He will be able to give his daughter a splendid dowry, and Gytrash will make my Rolf his only heir. I have already represented the case in this aspect to my Cousin Jim.

"'This Heber,' I said, 'will be flying away in his uncanny machine to find the diamond mine, and he and Lady Honoria will have more riches than they will know what to do with. So, of course, you will act towards my boy as if he was your only son.'

"'Madam,' he said, 'are you plotting to kill me and put your brat in my place on the instant?'

"Oh, Carrie, what language! I don't know how I

answered him; but he only laughed at my consternation.

"'I am still a living man, madam, and likely to live for a good many years. So, hands off, and allow me to deal with your son as it may suit my convenience!'

"Was it not disheartening, Carrie? You never know how to take Cousin Jim. He may be in hard earnest, or only chaffing you.

"'With a diamond mine——' I was beginning, when he snapped me up.

"'How do you know the Earl's diamonds are not glass?' he said.

"'If they are, then the Earl is no earl, but an impostor,' I replied. 'I doubted him from the first——'

"'And only for the diamonds you would be ready to doubt him again?'

"'I think that in the interests of my poor Rolf you ought to ascertain whether he is an impostor or not. My son will succeed him as Earl of Finbarr, if he be the earl; but if he be not the earl, my son is already the earl, and ought to be your heir.'

"You see, I had become quite bold, Carrie, being provoked by the uncertainty of our position in this strange new state of affairs.

"And what do you suppose was his answer?

"'Madam,' he said, 'put it out of your calculations that your son will necessarily succeed to the title of Finbarr. The Earl is comparatively a young man, and may marry again.'

"Oh, my dear friend, what a blow! But I rallied my courage and reminded him that in such a case he was

all the more bound to compensate my boy and his mother for their disappointment. Gytrash is, alas! proof against all such appeals. He listened to me with one of his puzzling smiles, and left the room, laughing."

In another letter Emmeline continued her running report of the progress of events in the family.

"Oh, the diamonds are all right, and the Earl is buying back some of the property of his ancestors which is in the market! He is really a very gentlemanly man, quite the nobleman. I wonder how he kept up his manners and breeding while living with bears. He is really most attentive to me, and has made me some nice presents. Your poor friend is still rather attractive, dear Carrie, and not an old woman yet, seeing that a person said the other day: 'You look so juvenile, Mrs. Turbary. Only for your grown-up son——' you can guess the rest. But it is silly to repeat the flatteries of the world, which too often are insincere, and you are not to suppose that I expect to be Countess of Finbarr. I own that my style would be exactly suited to the title and the position, but there——!

"Meanwhile we are to have two weddings. Gytrash is making Rolf a handsome allowance, and the Westerns are behaving very well to Ettie. It was one of Cousin Jim's mischievous freaks—that wicked hint that the girl would have no fortune. The dear Duchess was threatening to send to Egypt for a young camel as a pet for her granddaughter, but everyone assured her the creature would die, and so she gave it up. I expect to see some dreadful wedding present arriving, something uncanny, out of a tomb perhaps. Ettie says that as they will have

to move about a great deal they may ask Grandmamma to store it for them, in case it proves too hideous to be harbourable. That last is the expression of my future daughter-in-law. She is fond of using words that are not in the dictionary.

"Honoria's wedding present from Cousin Jim is a funny one. He has bought the estate and Castle of Glyn and made them over to her. I don't envy her on that head, I do assure you, but my lady professes to be much delighted, and is planning to conquer the bog and replace the peasant families in their holdings.

"If Heber should find the diamond mine, and fetch home enough diamonds, perhaps it could be done. I hear them planning how they will drain, and dig, and build harbours, and make new houses. Mrs. O'Donovan's farm-house is to be improved (into something quite delightful as a seaside residence, I suppose), and she intends to retire and live there while her son is flying about the world. Whether his wife will accompany him on his trips, when she is not too busy in draining the bogs, I do not know.

"As for me, I will certainly never consent to see that miserable country again. I thank heaven my son is not an Irishman; for, though a member of the Turbary family, he was born in India. And Ettie has no connection whatever with the beggarly sister island, as I heard somebody calling it the other morning.

"I hear, however, that Mr. Ferrall, who is really a man of taste, and, in spite of his Irish name, was born in England, intends returning to his snail-shell, and I dare say there will be some rebuilding and improving on those premises also. Such fancies are all too strange

for my comprehension. That anyone who could walk down Piccadilly any day of his life should choose to spend even part of his time existing like a shellfish on a Connaught foreshore is unthinkable.

"I must not forget to tell you how greatly Major Turbary has profited by the odd form which Gytrash has taken it in his head to give to his wedding present to Honoria. The price paid the Major for his precious estate has placed him in greater prosperity than he can ever have enjoyed before in the course of his lifetime. But he, at least, though most disagreeable as an individual, has common sense, and elects to spend the remainder of his life in London. The said remainder is rather an uncertain quantity, if we may judge from Kerrigan's account of his master's health. I wonder to whom he will leave his property. I am sorry now that I did not pay him a little more attention when at Tam Towers. But one cannot always be sure of doing the right thing. And yet how often I allowed him to beat me at cards when I was patiently bearing him company at his penal settlement of Glyn!

"I hear that Honoria talks of gathering together again the old servants who used to be at Glyn, including Mrs. Brennan, the housekeeper, who, she says, was very kind to her. For my part I consider that all housekeepers are impertinent. Honoria, for an earl's daughter, has the most outlandish tastes and fancies. I suppose the same kind of inclinations that led her father to spend years among polar bears is now by the laws of heredity drawing her ladyship to Connaught. The ridiculous and irrepressible Kerrigan will, I am sure, ultimately gravitate back to the land that

produced his audacity, and after his master's departure he will be included in Lady Honoria's staff at Glyn.

"A nice party of absurd Irish they will be; radicals or socialists I call them, or anything else you can think of that turns things upside down, and would set the well-born, the educated, and the distinguished to wait on the ignorant and despicable.

"It is some relief to my feelings to pour this out to you, for I seem to be the only member of my circle who has any conception of what is due to the proprieties. Even the dear Duchess of Doldrums has her fad for doing something to improve the Egyptians, black as they are, and in that respect, perhaps, lower than the poorest of even the Irish!

"There is another matter that disturbs me, and how I wish I could have your advice on the subject! But, alas! I must do without it, for these weddings are coming on so soon, and telegrams to India are so expensive, and so few words can be said in them. It is a question of my dress on the great occasions. As the mother of one bridegroom and kinswoman of the other bride I ought to make a handsome appearance. I waver between a gold-colour brocade and a crimson velvet, and both are so becoming that I am unable to decide. Ettie warns me not to ask counsel of the Duchess, as her grandmamma would offer me an Eastern costume, and I should have to wear it, at the risk of offending her. I wonder if she will appear in something of the kind herself. But then, you know, my dear Carrie, a duchess may do anything!"

After the weddings were over Emmeline wrote again to her friend, with a glowing account of all

the proceedings, and a few lamentations as to her own future prospects.

"I must tell you that Gytrash, besides his generous conduct to Rolf, has made me a very nice allowance, very good indeed, I admit, but not enough to enable me to set up as handsome an establishment of my own as I could wish for. So my plans are just at present rather uncertain. I could easily get an invitation to make my home at the Towers if I pleased, but seclusion, even if splendid, is still seclusion, and I feel that I was never born to be a prisoner, even in a gilded cage with a never-failing lump of sugar between the bars. Gytrash, now that the young people have migrated, will hardly ever be at home, and his house parties will only be occasional. No, I could never live at Tam Towers now, unless as its mistress, and I don't see——

"It would have been a comfortable ending, but men are so funny, and they don't always perceive what is for their good. I asked my cousin Jim the other day what he would do when he came to be quite old and found himself alone, and he said that as soon as he began to feel tottery he would go to Honoria to be nursed.

"'I know she can nurse,' he said. 'I don't forget the Major and the bog slide!'

"Truly, neither do I, my dear, but you see how things are always turned on me, and, of course, I could say no more at the moment.

"I believe the end of it will be, my Carrie, that your old friend will travel back to India. I feel that I could live in better style there on my income, and make a better

figure, than in London or in Paris. My old circle, of which you are one, would probably receive me back with pleasure in my improved circumstances. By this you will understand that your poor Emmeline has not lost her habit of making the best of things, even though life is so exceedingly disappointing, and really deserving individuals so seldom carry off the prizes."